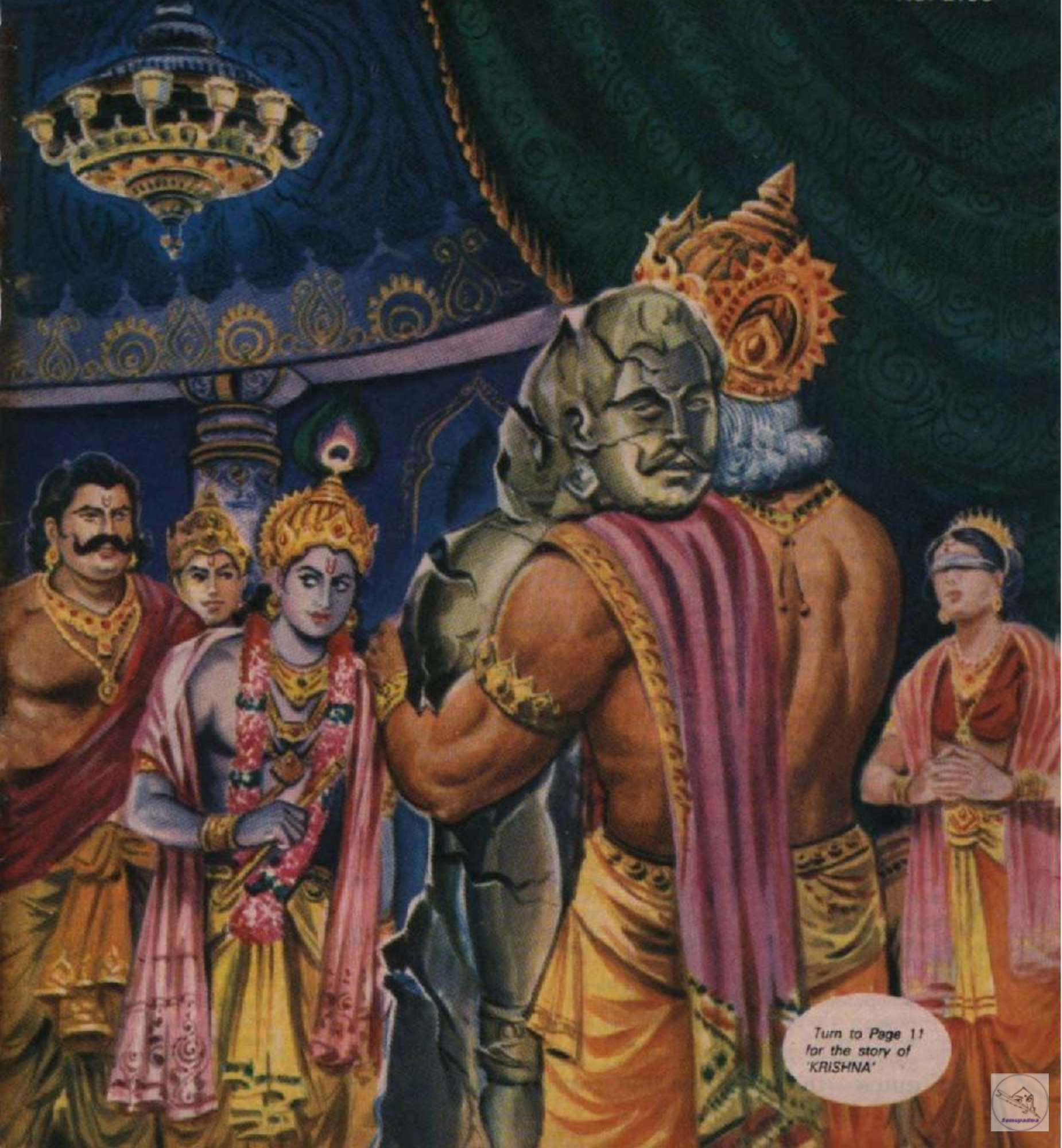


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## NEXT ISSUE

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"Let each one of us do his duty to his country and to his people and not dwell too much on the duty of others."  
—**Jawaharlal Nehru**

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# CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

## CHARACTERS FROM CLASSICS

Who does not know of Rama or Ravana, of Krishna and Kamsa? Some know more about them, some less. Some have derived profound spiritual, philosophical or moral lessons from their lives; others have enjoyed the stories in which they figure.

But the world of Indian classics is vast, from the plays of Vyasa (the playwright who lived before Kalidasa) to the immortal fiction like the *Katha-sarit-sagara*, from the great epics to the Puranas. They portray innumerable characters, dramatic, colourful and significant.

Beginning with the next issue, your magazine will present the story of such characters, one at a time. This will be a refreshing window into the charming garden of our literature.



अरावप्युचित कायमातिथ्यं गृहमागते ।

छेतुः पार्श्वगतं छायां नोपसंहरते द्रुमः ॥

*Arāvapyucitaṁ kāryamātithyaṁ gṛhamāgate*

*Chetuḥ pāśvagaṭāṁ chāyāṁ nopasaṁharate drumah*

Extend your hospitality even to an enemy if he becomes your guest. A tree does not refrain from giving shade even to the fellow who is chopping it.

— The Hitopadeshah.



# NEWS FLASH



## Meet the Tallest Elephant in the World

To meet him you have to go not very far—but up to 5.00 km South-west of Kathmandu. An elephant roaming in the Royal Shuklafanta Wildlife Reserve there could well be the world's tallest elephant, according to the Wild Life Fund, India.

## Beware of Moustache!

It is not a question of your getting afraid of your teacher or captain with robust moustache! What is in question is the effect of moustache on one's health. According to a report published by a physico-radiological research institute of the U.S.S.R., the moustache retains certain harmful elements got from the atmosphere and pollutes the air the man with the moustache inhales.



## Language of the Fishy

There is nothing fishy about it, says a Swedish researcher. After ten year of study he concludes that the fish have a language of their own—spoken through variation in the quality of the sounds they produce.

## Land of Elders

Azerbaijan in the U.S.S.R. can boast of 1,500 citizens over the age of 100. The oldest is Mrs. Alla Khiarova. At 151, she is still active weaving carpets and managing her house. One of her daughters is 104 years old.



## STORY OF

# Krishna

—By Manoj Das

*(The eventful Mahabharata War went on for days, innumerable soldiers and hundreds of heroes falling in the battle-field. Krishna continued to guide Arjuna's chariot through the vicissitudes of the war.)*

### END OF THE WAR

**B**y and by the renowned heroes fighting for the Kauravas fell one after another. Even the great Bhishma and the mighty Karna were no exception. Prince Duryodhana, whose arrogance was at the root of this unfortunate conflict, was mortally injured by Arjuna and lay in a jungle waiting for death. Bhima tore the heart of Duh-

shasana, the lustful brother of Duryodhana who had humiliated Draupadi.

As soon as the war ended with the Pandavas emerging victorious, Krishna led the Pandava brothers to Dhritarashtra's palace.

As soon as he and Arjuna got off the chariot, to Arjuna's great surprise the chariot began



to go up in flames.

"What is this?" asked an anxious Arjuna, wondering how to save the majestic vehicle.

"Has not it played its role efficiently, Arjuna? The fire had already entered the chariot. It could not burst forth because I was in it. The chariot's disappearance indicates that the war is over!" explained Krishna.

Yudhisthira shied away from the old king and his queen, Gandhari. Nor were the other Pandavas in the right mood to face the unfortunate couple. But Krishna spoke to the king and the queen on behalf of them. In many kind words he

assured them that the Pandavas would treat them as their own parents and never show any disrespect to them. He reminded Gandhari of what she used to tell Duryodhana whenever the latter sought her blessings. "Let the victory come to the just!" were her words. She should not forget that her own sons were unkind and unjust. However, they died courageously fighting in the battlefield. Thereby they had earned much merit.

The blind Dhritarashtra expressed a desire to embrace Bhima and threw open his arms. Had Krishna not stopped Bhi-



ma, he would have obliged the old man. While checking Bhima from advancing towards the king, Krishna pushed a life-size iron idol into his open arms.

Nobody but Krishna had anticipated what would happen to the idol. While it seemed that Dhritarashtra was only hugging it, he crushed it to scraps!

In the process Dhritarashtra himself bled and fell off his chair. His anger released, he gasped and then wept like a babe. "What did I do! I killed Bhima!" he moaned out his regret.

"Don't you worry, O King, for you have not killed Bhima,"

revealed Krishna. "You have wreaked your vengeance on a metal idol."

The old king sat embarrassed. One after another the Pandava brothers prostrated themselves to him. He seemed reconciled to the situation and blessed them.

But it was different with Gandhari. She, who kept her eyes sealed in sympathy with her blind husband, had developed immense supernatural powers. When Yudhishthira touched her feet, she could see his fingers through the lower edge of the cover on her eyes. The terrible wrath her vision emanated at once had its effect. Yudhist-



hira's nails grew curled and the finger-tips distorted.

Soon the Kaurava womenfolk went to the battlefield to locate their dear ones. It was a heart-rending sight. Wives wailed on discovering the corpses of their husbands. Some women, while weeping over their dead, tried to scare away the vultures and jackals that were having a merry time feeding on the corpses. Tears of the women melted the drying blood of the fallen. Ominous clouds gathered overhead as if attracted by their groans and curses.

Queen Gandhari stopped at the approach to the battlefield. Although her eyes remained shut, she could see the condition through her inner vision. She even described them to Krishna

who stood near her. At last, her voice stern and poignant, she said, "Krishna, I know for certain that you had the power to divert the events from their taking such a tragic course. Had you applied that power, I would not have been deprived of all my hundred sons. You deserve to be cursed. Thirtysix years hence you will be left without a single child or relative, because you did not try to save these relatives of yours from destruction. Some unexpected catastrophe will strike them all dead — and you too would meet an inglorious death!"

As Queen Gandhari fell silent after striking terror in the hearts of others, a faint and mysterious smile escaped Krishna's lips, for nothing was unforeseen so far as he was concerned!

*To Continue*



## WILL O' THE WISP

In my Grandmother's time there lived in the southern part of Ireland a blacksmith named William O'Connor. He was a loose-living fellow, given to gambling and drinking, and extravagant with his money. He was heavily in debt, with no way of getting out of the mess. So he called on the Devil to help him, and sure enough, the Devil answered his call.

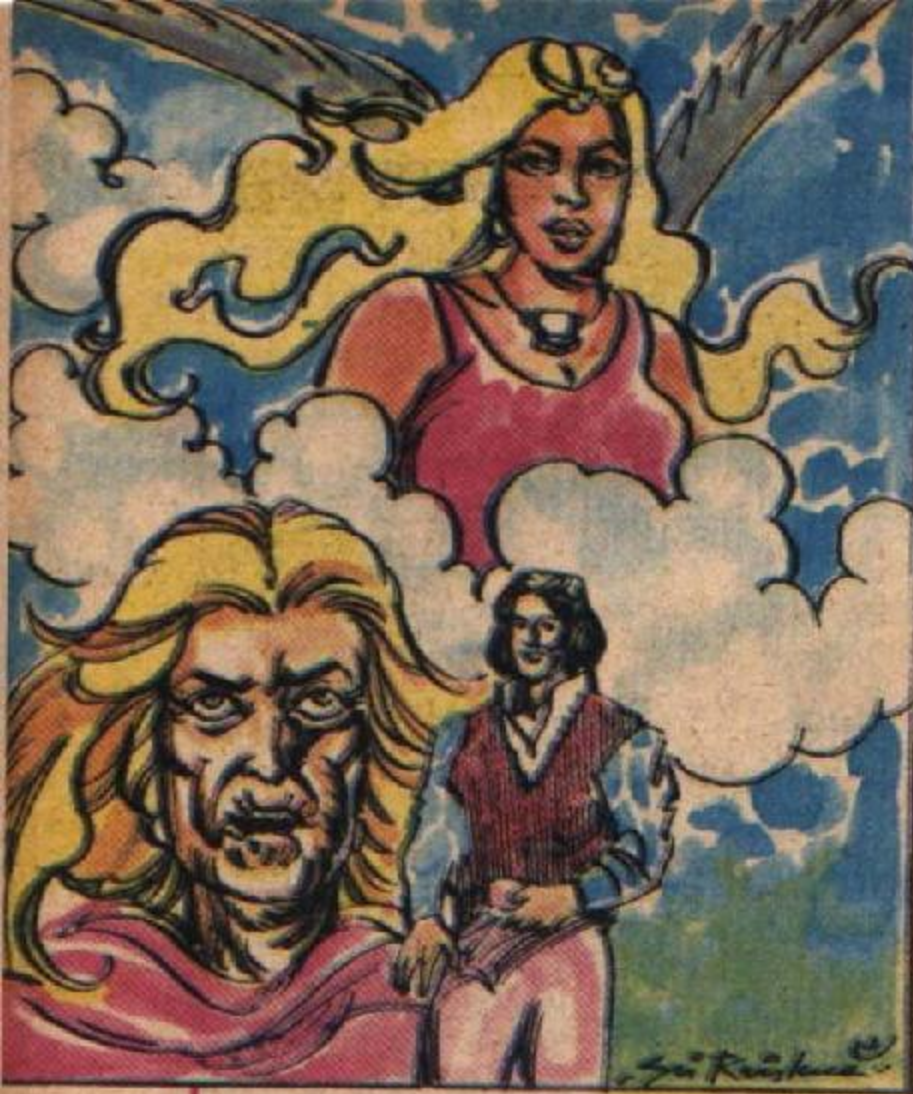
William struck a bargain with the Devil which seemed to satisfy both parties. William was to

receive as much gold as he could spend, but, in return, he was to sell his soul to the Devil, who was to come for him in seven years' time. After William had signed the bond with his blood, the Devil disappeared in a flash of blue flame.

William went from bad to worse, squandering his money in all manner of foolishness and wild living.

All the same, he was not a mean or stingy man, and he was always ready to help a poor





friend or neighbour. Many were the blessings he received from complete strangers whom he had helped; and many were the prayers offered for his deliverance from such misguided ways. But it all seemed of no avail.

One day, on the road, he met an old woman who asked him for help. Without any hesitation he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a bright gold guinea, which was a lot of money in those days. He gave it to her, saying, "I hope it will do you more good than it will to me."

The old woman thanked him and said, "Now, William, since

you have been so kind to a poor old woman, I will grant you any three wishes you ask for." You see, the old woman was a fairy — one of the good folk — and she had the power of granting wishes, provided it did not harm anyone.

William took her at her word and said, "First of all, I wish that anyone who lifts my sledgehammer to strike with it, must keep on striking till I take it from him."

"That wish is granted," said the fairy.

"Next, I wish that anyone who sits down in my arm-chair will never get up out of it till I release him."

"That wish is also granted," said the fairy.

"And now, for the last one, I wish for a purse. No one but myself can take out of that purse what I put in it."

The fairy immediately drew a purse from her clothes and gave it to William, saying, "Granted." And then she disappeared.

Some time after this, as William was working away at his forge and whistling to himself, who should walk in the door but the Devil himself.

"Ha! William," he says, "I've come for you at last. Time's up, my boy."

"All right," says Will, not in the least alarmed. "I'm ready to go, but you'll have to wait until I finish these plough-irons for a neighbour. I promised him I'd do them today, and I wouldn't like to go down below without keeping my promise."

"All right," says the Devil. "I'll wait."

"Take the sledge-hammer, then, and give me a hand," says Will, "and I'll finish all the quicker."

So the Devil took the hammer and began to strike.

Well, he struck and struck and struck away till he was sick and tired, and there stood Will laughing at him.

When the Devil was almost ready to drop, he cried out: "Will, Will, my friend, if you will only take this off me, I'll not bother you for five years to come, and let you have all the money you want till I come again!"

"It's a bargain," said William; and he took the hammer away, and the Devil disappeared.

After this, William was worse than ever. He wouldn't do any work until his time was nearly up. Then he pulled himself



together a little. One day he was ploughing a small patch of ground belonging to him when the old Devil came for him again.

"I want you this time," says the Devil.

"All right, old boy," says Will. "Come to the house with me while I put on a clean shirt. I don't like to go into company unless I look decent."

The Devil agreed to this, and they went back to the house together.

"Take a chair," says William, pushing over his arm-chair, and the Devil sat down in it, only to discover that he couldn't get up

again. He was well stuck. Will put on a clean shirt and went off to the market town, where there was a fair going on. He didn't come home till late at night, and there sat the Devil, blue in the face with his struggles to get out of the chair.

"Oh, Will!" he cried, "Let me out of this and I won't come near you for another five years."

So Will let him go; but he hadn't noticed that the Devil promised him no money this time. Will soon found that what money he had didn't last long, and people would give him no work because of his bad habits.



So Will found himself begging from door to door. When the time came round again, and the Devil reappeared, poor Will said, "I'm glad you've come, for I'm sick and tired of living. I'm not thinking of playing any more tricks on you." And off they marched together.

After a while they passed an inn, and William said, "Many's the time I had a good meal there, and I'd like to have one parting meal before leaving this world, but I haven't a farthing. I have often heard," he said to the Devil, "that you can change yourself into any shape you like. If you can, just change yourself

into a sovereign, and I can go in and get a meal, and then I'll be ready to go anywhere you take me."

"All right," said the Devil. "I'll oblige you now, as it's the last time, and I know you can't get away from me."

So he changed himself into the coin and Will put it in his purse. Then he went into the inn and throwing his purse on the counter, called for a number of dishes. After he had eaten as much as he could, the innkeeper asked for his money, and Will told him to take it from the purse; but of course the innkeeper couldn't take it out.



Will said, "I've offered you the money and you won't take it, so I'll keep it myself." He put the purse back in his pocket.

After they had bundled him out of the inn, he returned to his house. He went to his forge and put the purse on the anvil. Lifting his hammer he began to strike it, till the Devil inside it begged for mercy, crying out: "Will, if you let me out of this, I'll never come near you again, and I'll give you enough money to last your lifetime!"

"Agreed," says William, and he released him, and the Devil flew off, yelling from the beating he had received.

After this Will lived very comfortably and gave away a great deal in charity. At last, however, he had to die, like all of us. He marched to the gate of heaven and asked to be let in;

but when he told them his name, they said he'd had dealings with the Devil and couldn't be allowed in. So off he marched till he got to the door of the other place, and asked to be allowed in. They asked him his name, and he said William O'Connor.

"No, no, don't let him in!" cried the Devil. "He'll get the better of all of us here. He got the better of me when he was on earth, and if we let him in, he'll make hell unbearable for us. Send him away — we don't want him here!"

So they threw him a lighted wisp, and from that day to this he has been wandering around the world with his lighted wisp, trying to find some place to rest. We call him Will O' the Wisp.

—By Ruskin Bond



# Oliver Twist



Beginning this month we bring to you our picture adaptation of the immortal novel by Charles Dickens which has long held pride of place among the best loved works of this great English novelist.



Among other public buildings in a certain town, it boasts of one which is common to most towns great or small, a workhouse. It was to this workhouse that an unknown woman who had been found dying in the street had been brought, and it was here that her son, Oliver Twist, was born.



The destitute situation of this now infant orphan was duly reported by the workhouse authorities who resolved that he should be farmed out to a branch workhouse, where he was brought up on the smallest portions of food, so that eventually his ninth birthday found him a pale, thin child, diminutive in stature and decidedly small.

This particular birthday, Oliver was spending in the coal cellar with two other young gentlemen as a punishment for telling that they were all hungry. As it happened, it was on this day that Mr. Bumble, the parish officer, had come to discuss Oliver with Mrs. Mann, the good lady of this wretched establishment.





"The child I had baptized as Oliver Twist, is nine years old today," Mr. Bumble said. "Oliver now being too old to remain here, the board have determined to have him back in the workhouse. Therefore let him be brought to me at once."

"I'll fetch him directly," said Mrs. Mann, leaving the room at once for that purpose. And in due course, Oliver, now suitably cleaned up after having been brought out of the coal hole, was brought before Mr. Bumble. "Your time is finished here," Mr. Bumble told him. "So prepare at once to come along with me."



So it was thus that Oliver came to be led away by Mr. Bumble from the wretched home where one kind word or look had never lighted the gloom of his infant years. Even so, he was filled with childish grief, for the only friends he had ever known lived in that house, and now he would never see them again.



Mr. Bumble walked along with long strides, and Oliver grasping his cuff, ran beside him, enquiring at the end of every quarter of a mile, whether they were "nearly there". To these questions Mr. Bumble returned very brief replies.

Oliver had not been within the walls of the workhouse a quarter of an hour, when Mr. Bumble appeared again. Giving him a tap on the head with his cane to wake him up, and another on his back to make him lively, Mr. Bumble conducted him into a large whitewashed room where a number of fat gentlemen sat around a table. "Bow to the Board," said Mr. Bumble.



"Well, Oliver Twist," said one of the men, "You have come here to be educated, and taught a useful trade, therefore you will begin to pick oakum tomorrow morning at six o' clock." Oliver was then hurried away by Mr. Bumble to a large ward, where on a rough, hard bed, he sobbed himself to sleep.

For the first six months Oliver suffered greatly, not least from the lack of food. The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall with a boiler at one end, out of which the master ladled gruel at meal times. The portions that he gave were so small that the boys finally decided that lots should be drawn among them as to who should go up to the master and ask for more. It fell to Oliver Twist to perform this task.



Advancing on the master, Oliver said, somewhat alarmed at his own boldness. "Please sir, I want some more."

The master was a very healthy man, but he turned very pale. He gazed in astonishment at the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to his boiler. "What?" he said at length, in a faint voice.



"Please, sir," replied Oliver. "I want some more." The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle, grabbed him in his arms and shrieked aloud for Mr. Bumble, the beadle.

—To Continue

## THE COSTLY LESSON

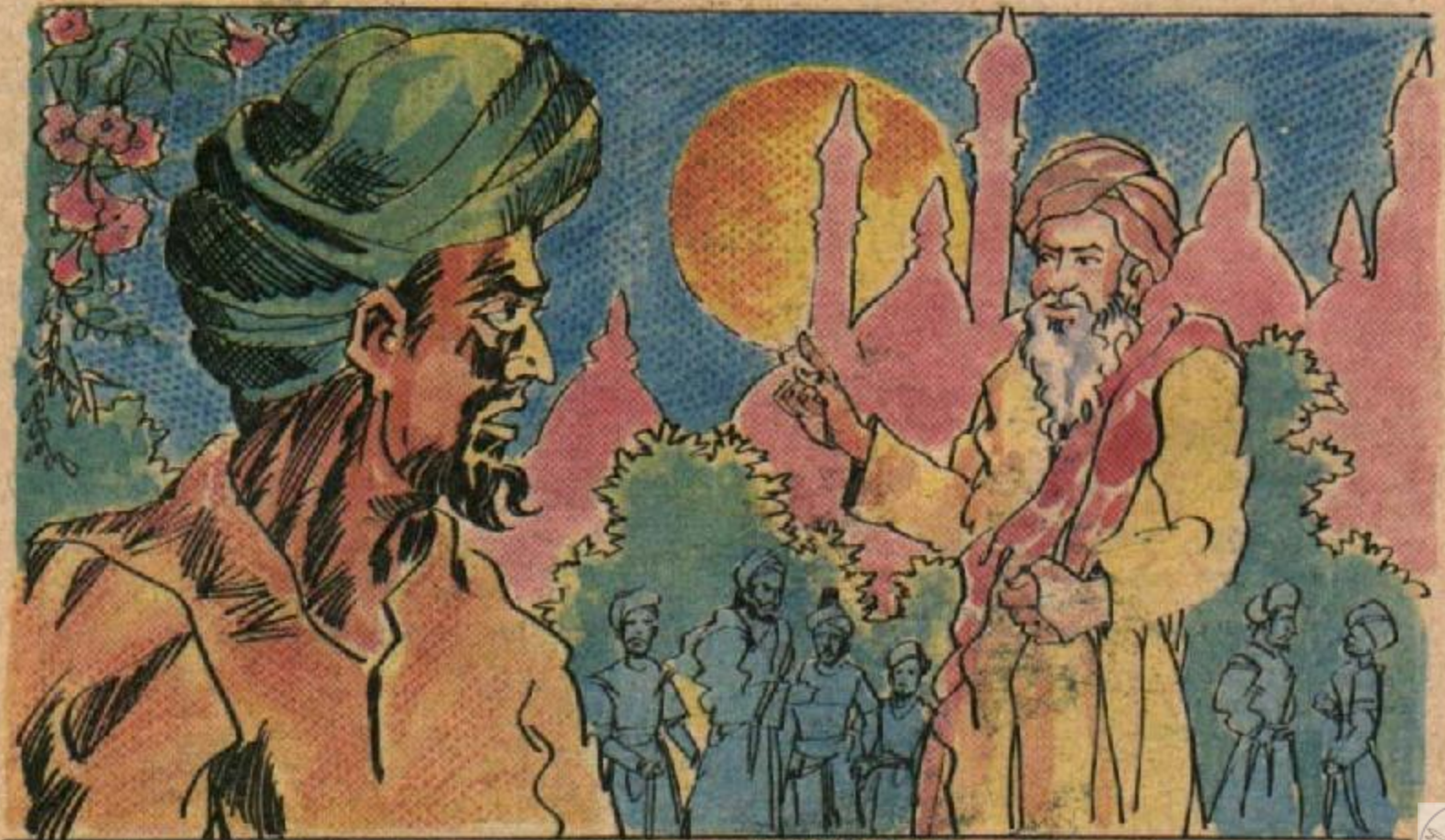
**M**y story is sad. But it should sound interesting to you, for you are only listening to it. I don't wish you to have the kind of experience which I have had. If you learn some lesson from my story, I shall feel rewarded.

I was leading a happy life. What I earned from my meat shop, was more than I could spend. There was no other meat shop in the town to which customers could go for meat of the best quality. They could also

depend on me for any quantity. I bought select goats and always kept my courtyard well-stocked with them.

Although I was a mere butcher, people began to show respect to me. The poorer ones even saluted me. I felt proud of my wealth and position.

One day a stranger visited my shop. He was an old man. From his appearance I knew that he came from a faraway land where things were quite costly.





"Friend, will you sell me some meat?" he asked me and mentioned the quantity he needed.

"You have to pay a silver coin for it," I replied.

"Friend, are you not asking too high a price?" he protested: "In my land one can buy a live healthy goat for a silver coin!"

"Get out if you don't want to buy," I said in my pride.

There was a smile on the stranger's face. He tossed a silver coin at me and took the meat and went away.

I was very happy at receiving a silver coin that looked like coming fresh from the mint. It

was equal to my full day's profit. I praised myself for my cleverness.

The stranger visited my shop again the next day. Without a single word he handed over a silver coin to me.

"The price for the quantity is double today." I said mischievously. Without arguing with me, he handed over another coin to me and left with the meat.

I felt quite flattered with myself. I decided to play the same trick on him if he came the next day.

But at night my happiness changed into disappointment and anger. It was because the three coins had changed into three worthless pieces of wood!

Next day, as soon as I saw the old man coming, I caught him firmly by the neck and dragged him onto my verandah and demanded of him, "How dare you deceive me?"

"Is it not you who deceived me?" he asked sneeringly.

My anger shot up. I manhandled him. He began to shout in a shrill voice. Passers-by and shop-keepers of the neighbourhood rushed in. "What's the matter?" they were curious to

know.

"He used to buy meat from me for fake silver coins!" I informed them.

"Gentlemen, am I a fool to pay him silver coins for some meat? The fact is, I found out that this fellow is selling dog's meat branding them as goat's. Lest I should make his nefarious secret public, he is accusing me of some mischief," proclaimed the old man.

I stood speechless at his wicked accusation.

"Can you prove what you say?" someone from the public asked him.

"I think I can," said the old

man. He then led the people into the inner courtyard. Lo and behold! The goats I had kept there had all turned into dogs!

I could not explain why some stray dogs should be kept tied up in my courtyard. There was no time for me to tell them that the old man was a wicked wizard.

They dragged me to the Amir of the city who ordered for the forfeiture of my property. Not only that, they split my skin with hundred lashes and blinded one of my eyes and drove me out of the land.

After days of travel I reached another land where I lived as a



beggar. Someone warned me, saying, "Never appear before the Sultan, because the Sultan dreads one-eyed persons as evil omens. He might kill you."

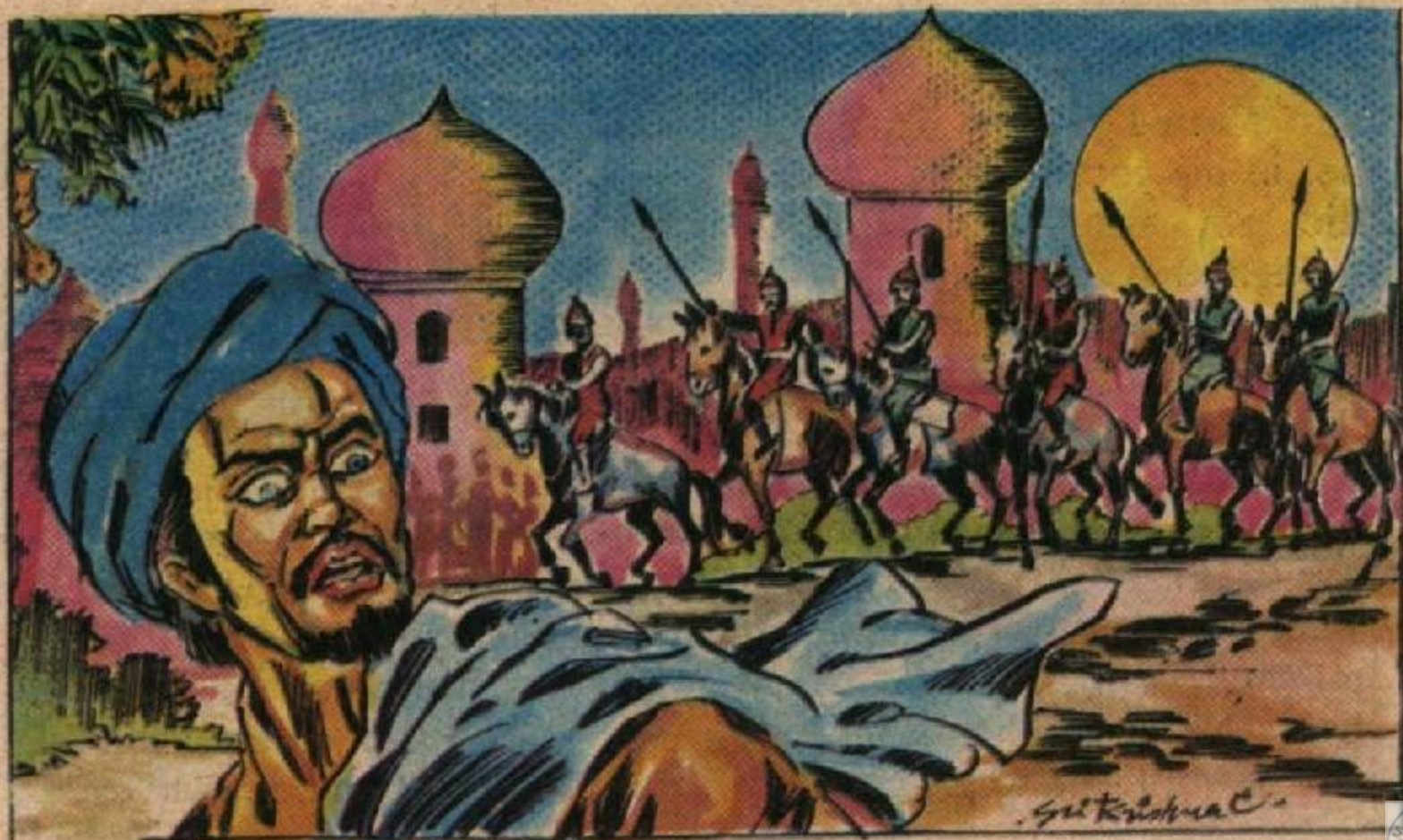
One day I heard some shouts and gallops and on enquiry learnt that the Sultan and his party were coming that way. I ran for life. As the sound of the galloping party came nearer, I pushed open the door of a house in order to hide inside it.

At once three hefty men fell on me and began to beat me, shouting, "At last we have caught you — you who have thrice entered our house at this hour when we are out for work

and stolen away our food!"

After they had got tired of beating me, they threw me on the road. I swooned away. Later I managed to escape from that land too. Meanwhile my brother learnt of my plight and found me out after a long search. I have survived my ordeals only to tell people that once you are on the wrong track, you never know what might come upon you. I should be living a happy life had I not been proud and greedy. I had no business to be unfair to that old man, a stranger in my country. I have paid heavily for my arrogance!

(Adapted)





## STRANGE POWER IN COINS

**N**irmal was a handsome young man. With his hard and honest work he won the praises of everyone in the village. Of course, he won Nilima's heart for other reasons.

Everyone was ready to dole out a lot of good words, but, no one was ready to part with sufficient money for the work that Nirmal did for them. But he, in his youthful exuberance, did not mind it much. He thought that one day, in times of need, he could always cash in on the goodwill he created amongst the village people.

What was more urgent to him was his marriage. Sensing the eagerness of the couple who wanted to get married, Nilima's father, Vishalji, one day called home Nirmal and told him: "I will be very glad to give you my

daughter's hand in marriage. But, how will you maintain her? Earn some money and a couple of acres of paddy land and then come back to me."

As Nirmal was going out of the house, a little downhearted, Nilima called him aside and said, "Don't be disappointed. It is easy to please my father. Just present him a gold bordered dhoti and you'll be able to win his heart."

Confident of getting the favour, Nirmal approached Ghanshyam, the cloth-merchant, and asked him for the dhoti. "I've it ready, but, it will cost you ten silver coins. Have you brought the money?" asked the merchant.

It was like a slap on his face. He approached several people for a loan, but no one was ready

to advance him any money. Nirmal was disillusioned.

However, goaded and encouraged by Nilima, Nirmal worked harder, skipped several meals and ultimately, at the end of one full month, he saved ten silver coins and gave them to Ghanshyam.

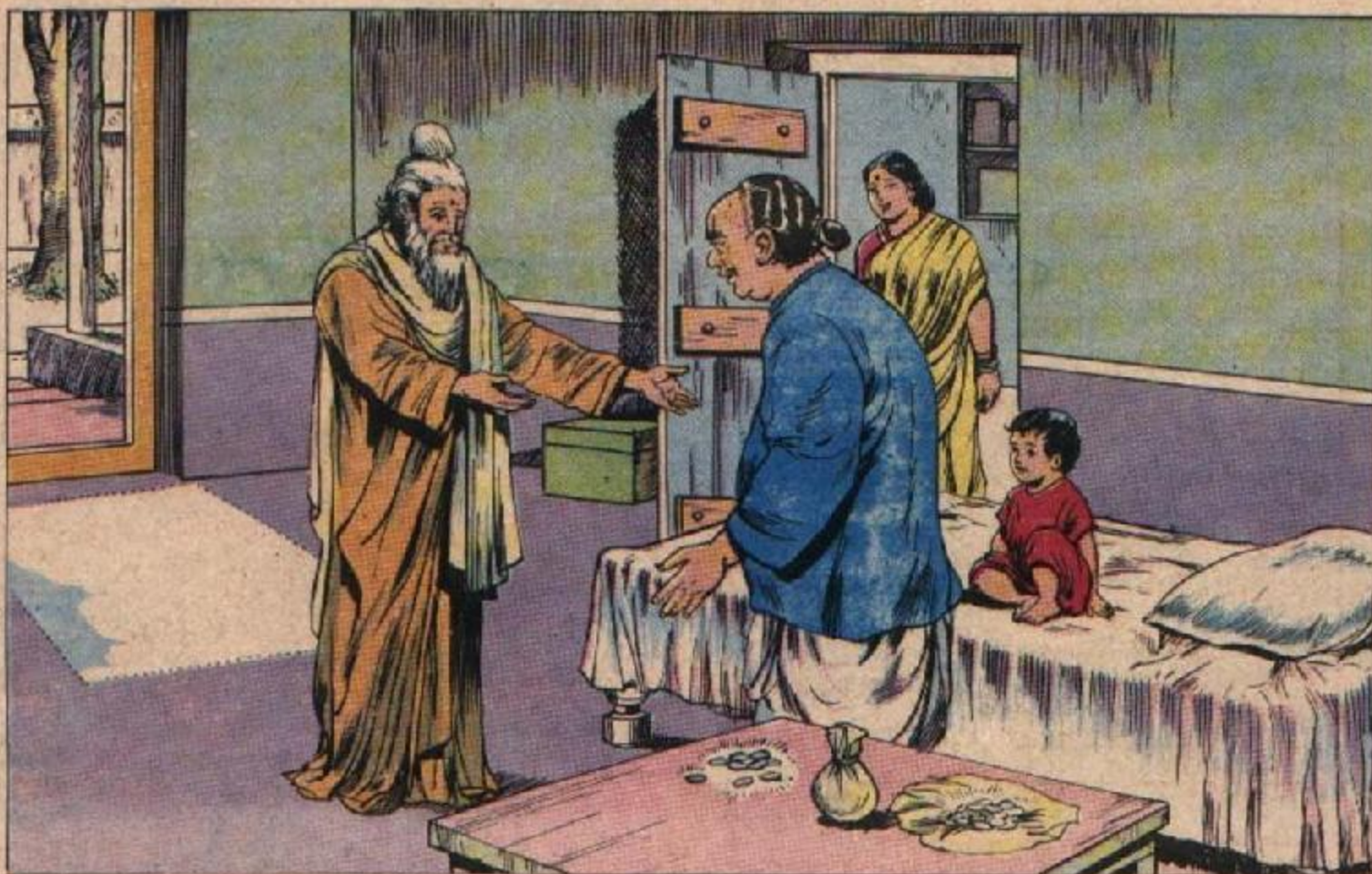
Vishalji was overjoyed with the gift of the gold bordered dhoti. He was convinced that Nirmal was a hard worker and that he'll be able to keep his daughter happy. He agreed to waive off his condition and to make him his son-in-law at the earliest auspicious date.

In the meantime, a strange

thing happened in the village. Ghanshyam's two year old son took ill and no doctor was able to cure him. In fact, everyone lost hope even of his survival. Helpless, the father ultimately approached a yogi and prayed to him to save his son.

The yogi visited his house, patted the child on the forehead and then said, "The child will not die. Give him this medicine immediately and by tomorrow morning he'll be all right." Then he left Ghanshyam's house.

The whole day and the night passed, but, there was no difference in the child who was in a deep coma. Anxiety gave way to



fear and early next morning Ghanshyam rushed to the yogi once again and told him of the child's condition.

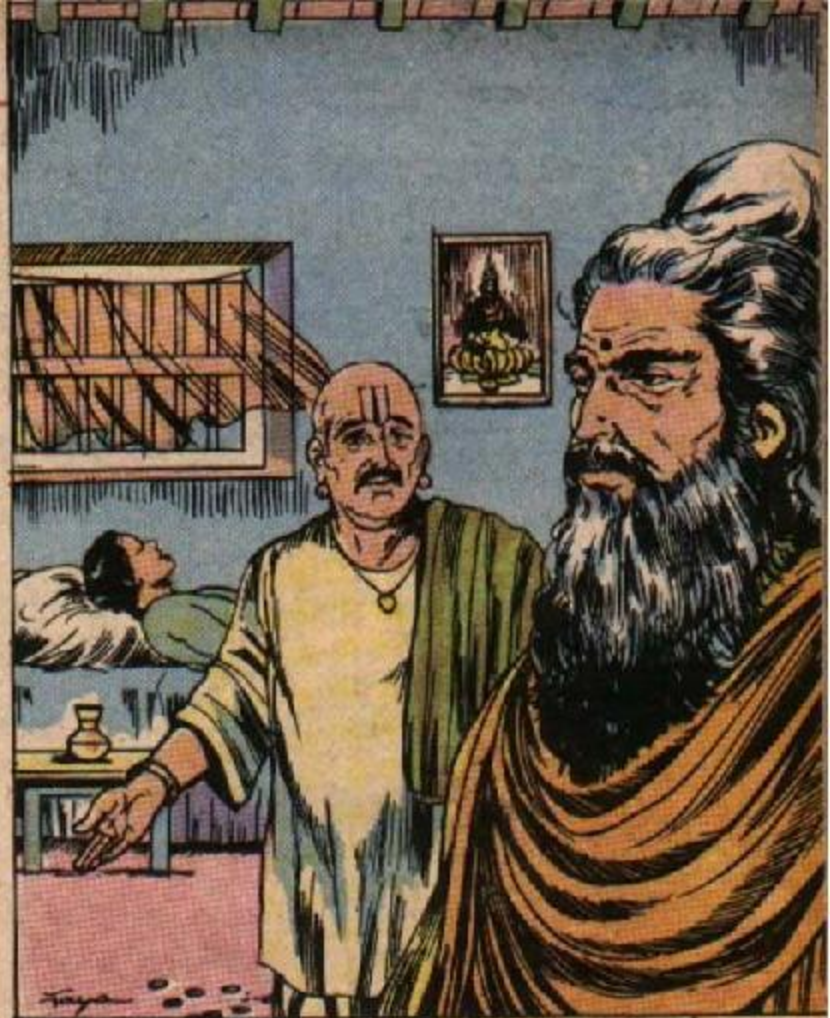
"Do not worry," assured the yogi. "The Deity requires an offering. Give her whatever you can," advised the wise man.

The merchant returned with offerings of gold and silver and placed them in front of the yogi.

"Take them away, take them away please," shouted the yogi as soon as he touched the ornaments. "All this is wealth earned by cheating and duping people. The Deity will not take this dishonest money. If you can bring me even ten silver coins earned honestly by someone, your offering will be accepted and your son will be saved," said the yogi, calming down a bit.

The merchant rushed to his shop, pulled out the cash-box and went back to the yogi. "Here is all the money that people have given me. I cannot differentiate between the honestly earned and the dishonestly earned money. It is for you to discover."

After discarding many coins, the yogi picked out a bundle which contained exactly ten



coins of silver. As soon as he offered them to the Deity, the young son of Ghanshyam woke up from his coma and sat up on the bed smiling, as if nothing ever had happened to him.

"Who gave you these coins?" asked the yogi.

"They were given to me by a young man of our village, Nirmal," said the merchant.

"It is strange that in this big village, Nirmal is the only honest worker," commented the yogi.

News spread that Ghanshyam's son was cured by a miracle done by the yogi. And people thronged to him for

cures.

The first one to reach him was the village headman, whose son was suffering from a strange illness for many years. The same procedure, that was used in Ghanshyam's son's case, was repeated. Once again it was found that the little savings that Nirmal had deposited with the headman towards the purchase of an acre of land, became effective in curing the headman's son.

The yogi then told the people, "Your village is beset with various illnesses because you are all living a life of self-deceit and corruption. Is it not a shame that in so big a village there should be only one man who earned every coin through honest labour alone? I should not

be surprised if your village is destroyed by a plague once Nirmal decides to leave it!"

Overnight Nirmal became the centre of attention and respect. The headman and the village business community pooled together a lot of money and with it they performed not only the marriage ceremony of Nirmal and Nilima, but also gifted them a lovely little house and two acres of land. This was how they chose to atone for their past ill-treatment of the young man and also to show their gratitude for saving the village by his honesty and integrity.

Nirmal and Nilima worked hard in their field and lived for long years leading a happy life of honesty and goodwill for all.



## The Great Disclosure

A traveller galloped into a village and shouted, "Listen, O Villagers! Give me food or I will do to your village the very thing I did to the other village!"



The villagers wondered what he might have done to the other village? Did he burn it? Is he a wizard who struck all the people blind or dumb?

To be on the safe side, they welcomed the traveller to the village rest-house and brought him the best of items cooked in different households. The traveller ate to his heart's content.



After he had finished eating, the villagers asked him, "Sir, what did you do to the other village?" Replied the traveller while hopping onto his horse, "I left that village behind!"

# The Four-Legged 'Fish'

**The sea otter is a mammal which eats and sleeps in the water, only coming ashore to have its young.**

**W**hen, in 1741, the Russian ship St. Peter was wrecked off the coast of Bering Island, the survivors, struggling ashore, found themselves swimming among hundreds of big otters.

Marooned on the island for many months, the shipwrecked Russians killed great numbers of the sea otters in order to use the meat for food and the pelts or skins for building tents and other shelters.

Eventually, the shipwrecked Russians were rescued and took back home with them several hundred sea otter pelts. These were sold at such high prices that large-scale hunting expeditions were sent out to collect sea otter skins.

Very soon, other nations joined in the otter hunt and the animals were so relentlessly slaughtered for their pelts that they were almost exterminated.

Sea otters once ranged in their millions along the Pacific coasts from the Kuril Islands, the Kamchatka peninsula, and Alaska down to Lower California. In 1910, wildlife conservationists in the USA persuaded their government to pass a law prohibiting the taking of sea otters within American waters.

By 1912, many other countries followed America's example. But the protective legislation came almost too late. Today, after more than half a century of strict enforcement of the protection legislation, the sea otter survives in only small groups.

Sea otters seldom come on to the land but live in small herds in shallow waters. They particularly favour places where there are thick beds of seaweed.

An adult otter weighs about 36 kilos and measures approximately a metre in length with a tail a third of a metre long. The head is large and blunt and the neck short and thick. It has tiny eyes and the small, pointed ears are almost hidden in the fur. The fore-legs are short; the hind legs are long and end in broad, webbed feet.

Sea otter fur is soft, lustrous and glossy. The colour varies according to individuals from a deep brown to a jet black, though the underpart of the body and the neck are generally of a lighter shade. The skin and fur hangs in very loose folds on the body.

The sea otter breeds only once every two years and the female has a single pup.

Sea otters sleep in the water, lying on their backs with their hind legs stretched out to keep their balance. They stick their front paws in the air and rest their jaws on the chest. To prevent itself from floating away while asleep, the sea otter twists strands of seaweed round its body, so anchoring itself to the seabed.

The herd sleeps close together and there is always one awake to act as guard and warn of any danger.

When sea otters wake in the morning they eat their main meal of the day. The chief foods are sea urchins, clams, crabs, mussels and other shellfish.

It is not uncommon for the animal to dive to a depth of 30 metres in search of food. When it collects a large shellfish, it also brings back to the surface with it a large flat stone. It floats on its back with the stone resting on its chest. It breaks the shell by holding the shell between its front paws and hitting it repeatedly on to the stone.

The sea otter swims as easily as a fish. It generally lies on its back and propels itself with its tail. But when alarmed or when greater speed is needed it turns itself over and strikes out with its hind feet.

Among the happiest of animals, sea otters spend a lot of time just playing in the water. One of the few occasions on which a sea otter will come ashore is when the female is ready to give birth to her pup.

Immediately the pup is born, the female carries it into the water and then floats with it clutched to her chest. During the next few weeks she teaches it to swim and search for food.

If the mother has to leave her pup for any length of time, she lets it float on its back securely anchored to strands of seaweed.

With the exception of the killer whale, the sea otter has few natural enemies. Like most



mammals that live in the water, the sea otter does not drink. It does, however, consume some salt water with its food.

Sea otters are among the most peaceful of animals. Members of a herd never fight amongst themselves, and they rarely attack members of another herd.

Because many of the sea otter's mannerisms are human-like, it is sometimes called "the old man of the sea". With its grizzly hair on head and shoulder and its heavy moustache, it often suggests an elderly gentleman.

Although the sea otter is no longer

threatened with extinction by hunters, it is again in danger.

Unlike other mammals which spend most of their lives in the sea, sea otters have no layer of fat or blubber under the skin to keep them warm. When they are resting or sleeping, there would be a fatal loss of body heat but for the air trapped in their hair. And that is exactly what is happening.

Oil leaking from tankers sailing near the sea otters' haunts mats the animals' fur. The insulation is then destroyed and in cold weather the otters freeze to death.



# PROPOSAL CALLED OFF

Bhupati Das of the village Bijipur was negotiating for his daughter's marriage with the son of Prasad Roy belonging to a distant village, Gangapur.

One day, Bhupati Das paid a visit to Prasad Roy's house in the company of his friend, Raghav. They were discussing about the date of marriage and other issues when Prasad Roy's daughter rushed into their room. She was in tears.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Prasad Roy.

"Father, I was returning from the temple when the rowdy Bhanu pulled my saree from behind and insulted me!" said the girl between sobs.

"Why did you go to the temple alone?" demanded Prasad Roy and said, "Forget about it!"

"Haven't I warned you several times against moving alone?" said the girl's brother.

Bhupati Das suddenly stood up and said, "Mr. Roy, I must return to my house immediately. There is a very important reason for my doing so."

He left, followed by his friend, Raghav.

"Why did you leave their house in such a hurry?" asked Raghav.

"My friend, I have decided to call off the proposal."

"Why?" asked Raghav, even more surprised.

"If they are reluctant to take any step against a rowdy who insulted their own daughter, how will they safeguard the dignity of their daughter-in-law?" said Bhupati Das.



## THE ASCETIC AND THE ANGLER

A traveller saw a man angling near a lake. Going near him, he asked, "Gentleman, will you kindly tell me which is the way to Bhimpur?"

The angler, far from replying, did not even look at the traveller.

"Gentleman, did you hear me? My question is, which is the way to Bhimpur? I am a stranger in the land," the traveller asked once again, after the lapse of a full minute.

Even then the angler made no

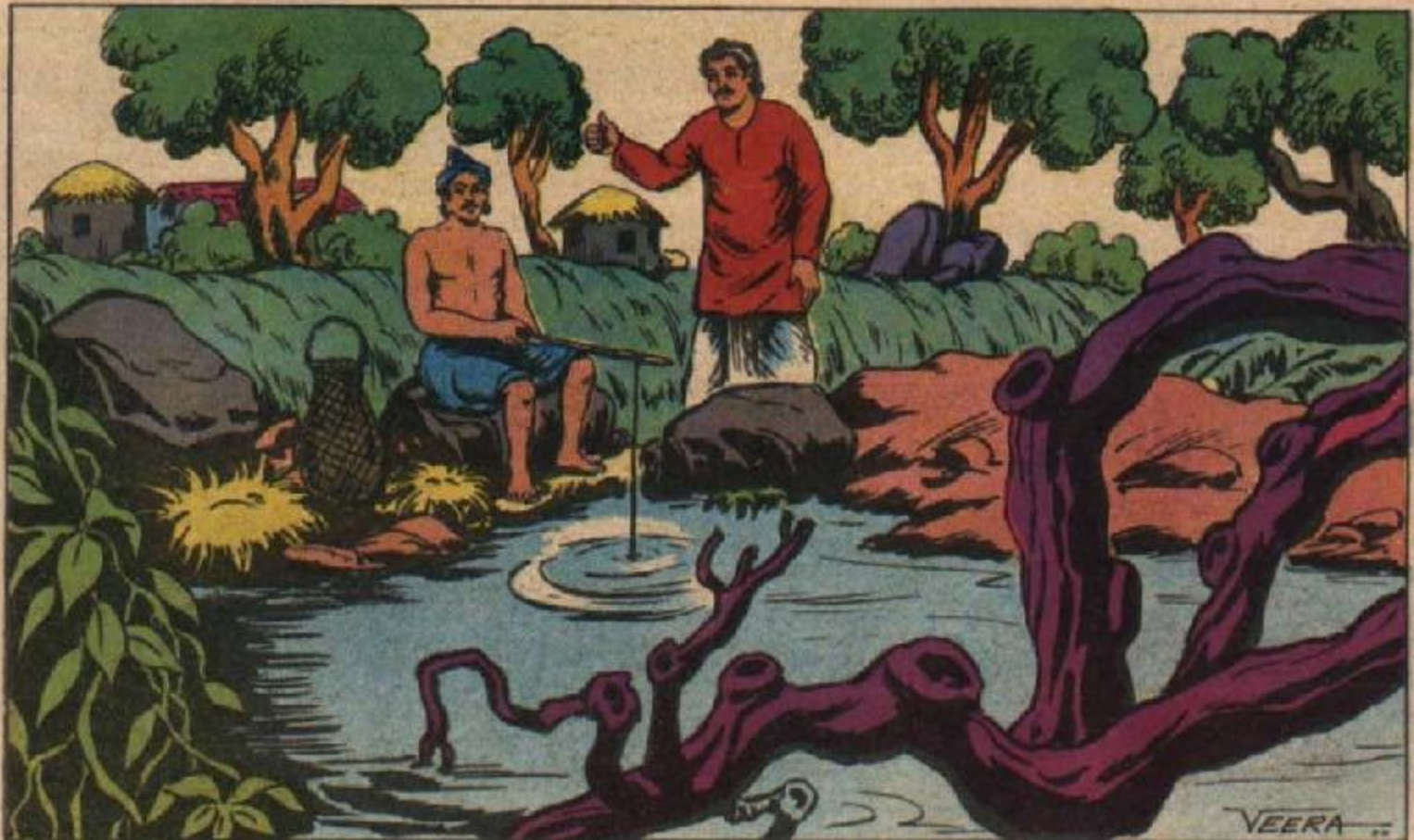
reply. Disgusted, the traveller moved away, cursing the man. But tired as he was, he sat down on a stone a few yards away.

After five minutes he saw a young ascetic approaching the angler.

"Sir, which is the way to Bhimpur?" the ascetic asked the angler.

The traveller pricked his ears to hear what the angler will say so that he too could benefit by the answer.

But the angler said nothing.



The ascetic repeated his question, but to no avail.

The traveller was sure that the ascetic would grow angry and curse the rude angler. But nothing like that happened. To his great surprise the traveller saw the ascetic prostrating himself to the angler and then resuming his journey quietly.

His spell of surprise over, the traveller ran behind the ascetic and asked him, "Holy man, will you please tell me what was the reason for your showing such respect to that fellow? Wasn't that fellow extremely discourteous?"

"Please don't speak anything

bad about him. He is one of my gurus!" replied the ascetic.

"That angler is your guru?" asked the traveller in utter puzzle.

"Yes, he taught me the value of concentration. Didn't you see how he remained totally undisturbed by my question? Not only his look, but also his mind was concentrated only on his goal. I wish, I could concentrate on God in the same manner!" explained the ascetic.

The ascetic went away. He was Avadhut, who knew how to learn a lesson from every object or situation. He had many gurus.

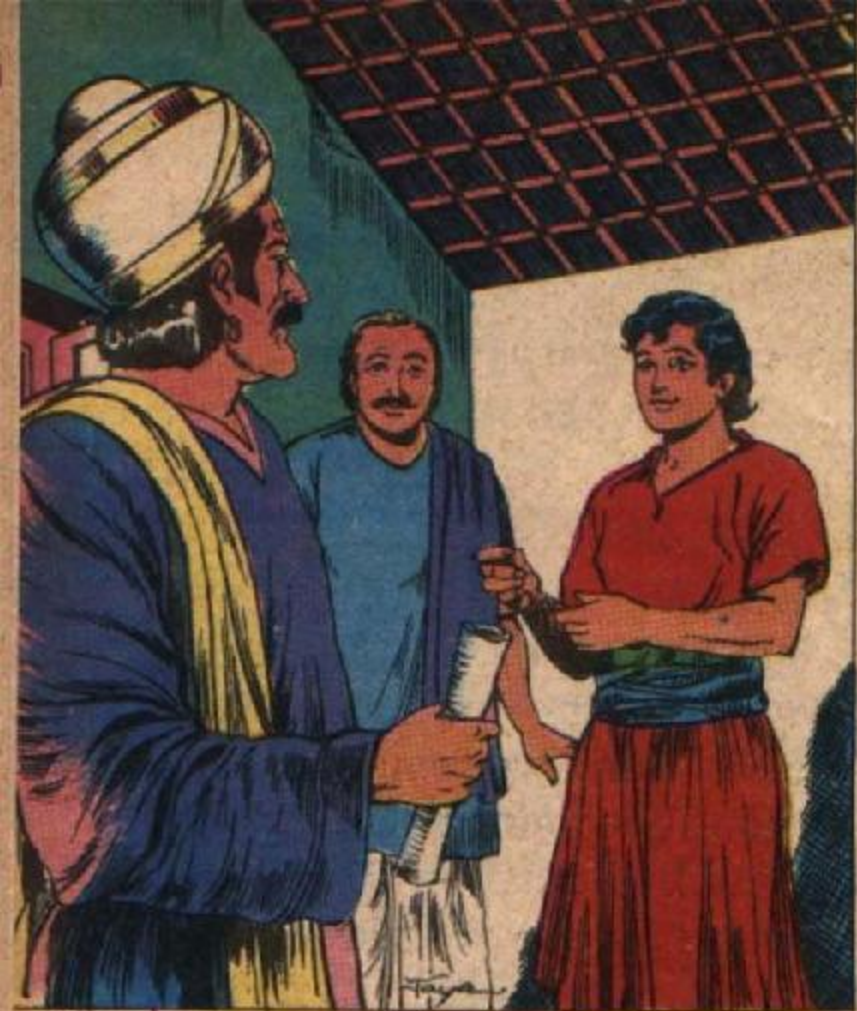


## THE REVENGE

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of the rumblings of thunder could be heard moaning of jackals and the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, who has thrust this task on your head? Are you sure that it is not his intention to humiliate you? Suppose one day you come to know that he really meant to humiliate you, what will be your attitude to him? Will you not take revenge on him if you get a chance? But, there are people who do not avenge their humiliation even when they have the chance to do so. Let me cite an





instance to you. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: In the village Gopipur lived Mahindra, a middle-class farmer. He was as intelligent as he was laborious. He sent his son Uttam to the town for higher education.

Uttam was a meritorious boy. He became popular not only in his educational institution but also in the whole town. He received a coveted award from the king for his poetry. He participated in a seminar of scholars and was highly praised for his discourse. At the completion of his studies, he

emerged as the best student of his institution.

Mahindra, naturally, felt very proud of Uttam. "My son," he told Uttam when the young man was back in the village, "now I'd like you to get married. I must see you settled in life."

Uttam was not eager to marry that soon. At the same time he did not wish to hurt his father's feelings. After some hesitation he consented to abide by his father's will.

Mahindra was very happy. He prepared to go out to meet Dhir Das, his neighbour. Dhir Das was the most wealthy merchant in that area. Mahindra used to observe his daughter, Sumati. She was beautiful and humble. Mahindra nursed a desire to bring her home as his daughter-in-law.

Just then they were met by a messenger from the king. He brought the good news that Uttam had been appointed as a scholar in the royal court.

Mahindra was elated. Who won't like to have Uttam as a son-in-law in his present status? Mahindra was sure that Dhir Das would feel honoured at the proposal he was going to broach before him.

Mahindra went to Dhir Das and told him about Uttam's luck. Dhir Das was very happy. "Please make it convenient to come to dinner with me tonight—along with dear Uttam," he said.

"Thanks. That will be a suitable time for finalising an important matter. I mean, I will be happy to bring Sumati home as Uttam's wife," said Mahindra.

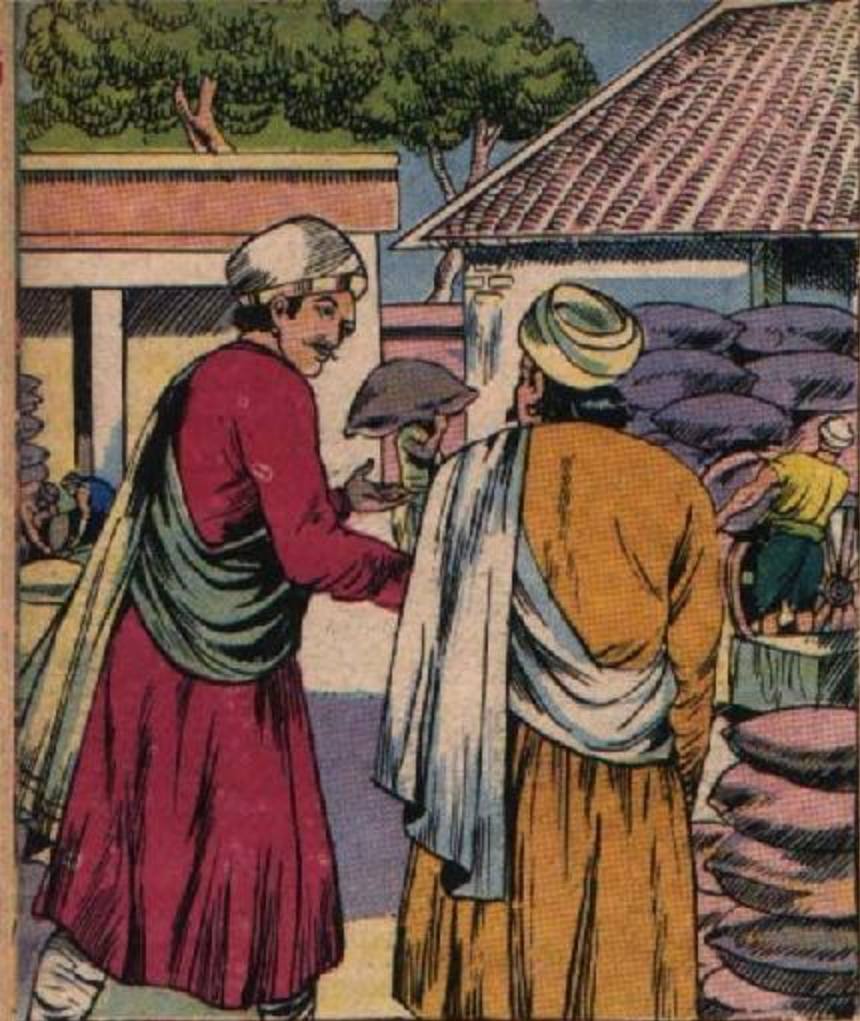
Dhir Das laughed as if he took Mahindra's proposal lightly. "Why should you choose our Sumati for your gifted son? This girl hardly knows any household work. Luxurious bringing up has spoilt her!" was his com-

ment.

"Oh no, I refuse to accept your view of Sumati. Don't I know her well enough? I shall be happy to take her home—provided you have no objection to my proposal," said Mahindra.

Dhir Das looked grave. Lowering his voice, he then said, "My brother, you and I are friends. Can't we remain friends without becoming relatives? To be frank, Sumati will not suit your family, nor your family will suit her. She is accustomed to command servants. She will feel at home in a house where she can continue to do so. When she





cannot do so, she will feel awkward. When you will see that she is not capable of coping up with the household work, you will feel dissatisfied. Being your neighbour I have to continuously worry over the situation. Please give a second thought to your proposal.”

Mahindra felt awfully humiliated. “We cannot come for the dinner, sorry,” he said and went out in a huff. Dhir Das had no chance to say a word more.

Mahindra straight went to the next village. He fixed Uttam’s marriage with the daughter of another friend of his and returned home.

In so many ways Dhir Das tried to reestablish his cordial relationship with Mahindra. But he did not succeed. Mahindra refused to talk to him. After some time Dhir Das got disgusted and stopped trying to reconcile with Mahindra.

Uttam’s marriage was over. He left for the town. Mahindra spent more and more time with Uttam.

The facilities and salary Uttam received enabled him to live comfortably and happily. But he observed that his father was never quite happy. One day he insisted on knowing the cause. Mahindra confessed that Dhir Das’s behaviour still rankled in him.

“Cheer up, father, one day we will take revenge on Dhir Das!” said Uttam, laughing.

Mahindra’s face brightened up. He looked happy thereafter.

Uttam prospered well. After a few years he resigned his job at the king’s court and settled down in his village. He set up the business of exporting the produce of his area to the town and became very rich. He raised a palatial building in place of his ancestral house. He grew richer than Dhir Das.



Sumati, Dhir Das's daughter, had married in a wealthy family. Sumati had a daughter; Uttam had a son.

One day, a friend told old Mahindra, "Dhir Das desires to marry his grand-daughter to your grandson. I think they will send the proposal duly in a week's time."

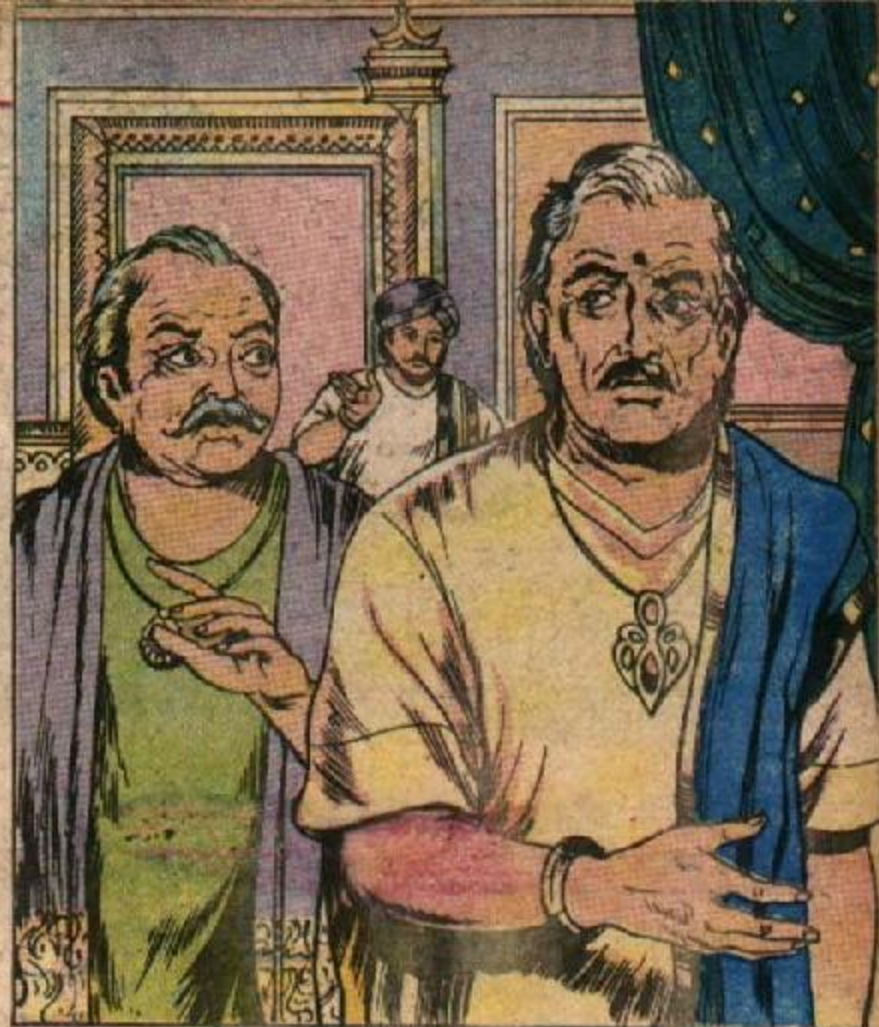
As soon as the friend left, Mahindra told Uttam what he had heard. "Don't forget to avenge our humiliation, my son!" he warned Uttam.

"Indeed, the time for that seems to have come!" remarked Uttam.

Soon Mahindra fell ill and died.

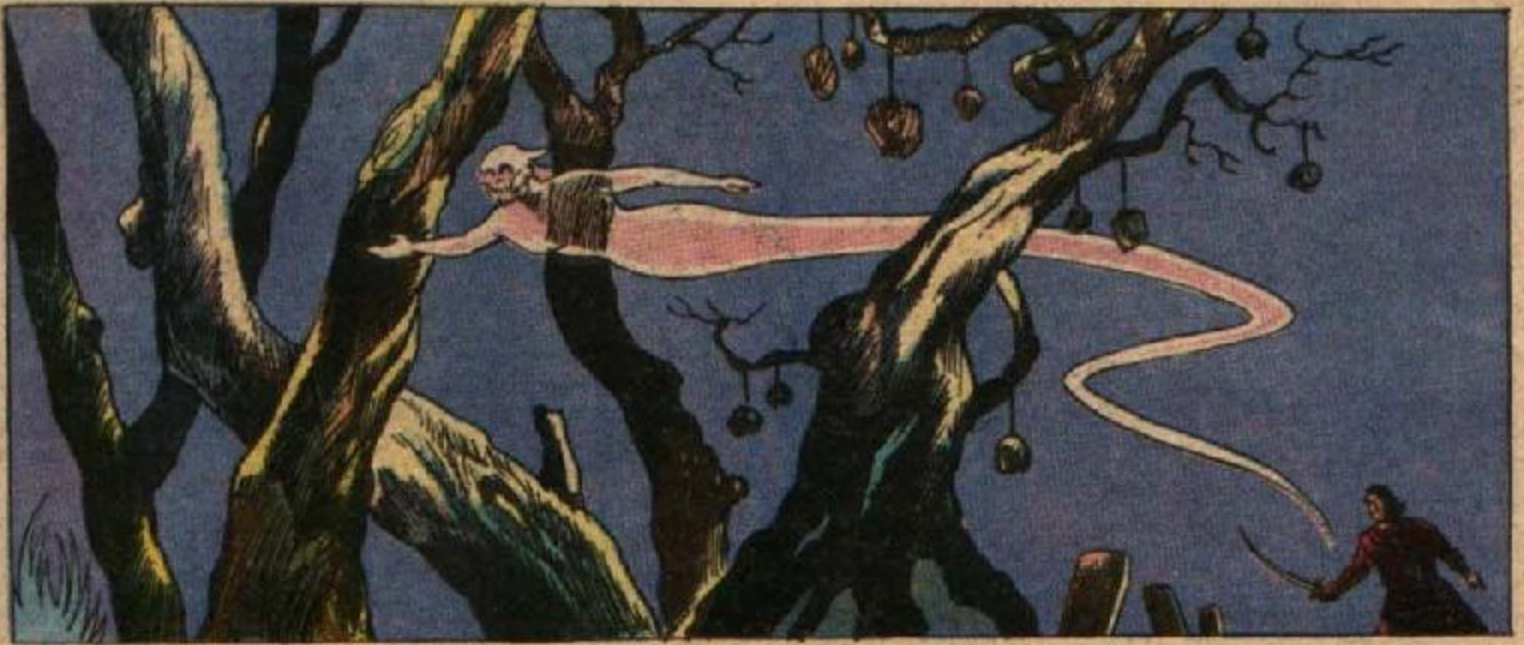
After the funeral rites for Mahindra were over, Dhir Das sent the proposal through a suave mediator. Uttam received the proposal with courtesy and consented to it. The marriage of his son with Dhir Das's grand-daughter was performed smoothly.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked in a challenging tone, "O King, did Uttam not betray his father's faith in him? How could he agree to the marriage proposal after asserting that he meant to



take revenge on Dhir Das? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

King Vikram replied forthwith, "Mahindra and Uttam had totally different outlooks. Mahindra desired to have Sumati as his daughter-in-law. That is why he felt insulted when his proposal was turned down. Uttam had not nursed any desire to marry Sumati. Hence there was no reason for his feeling insulted. To reject Dhir Das's proposal would have been the revenge according to Mahindra. According to Uttam,



the very fact that Dhir Das sent the proposal for relationship with them amounted to their taking revenge on Dhir Das. Mahindra was a common man. He had felt insulted comparing himself with Dhir Das. Uttam enjoyed social prestige right from his student days. He had no reason to compare himself with Dhir Das and feel inferior. Any way, he felt that his father's

humiliation was sufficiently avenged when Dhir Das recognised their status. He had not given much thought to his father's idea of revenge. Hence there is no question of his betraying his father's faith."

No sooner had the king concluded his reply than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

## WONDER WITH COLOURS





## A PROFITABLE PILGRIMAGE

**T**he house was beautiful. It was a dream come true for Niranjana. He had worked hard through his youth and middle age and saved up enough money in order to build the house of his dreams. It was there at last and Niranjana felt happy and contented.

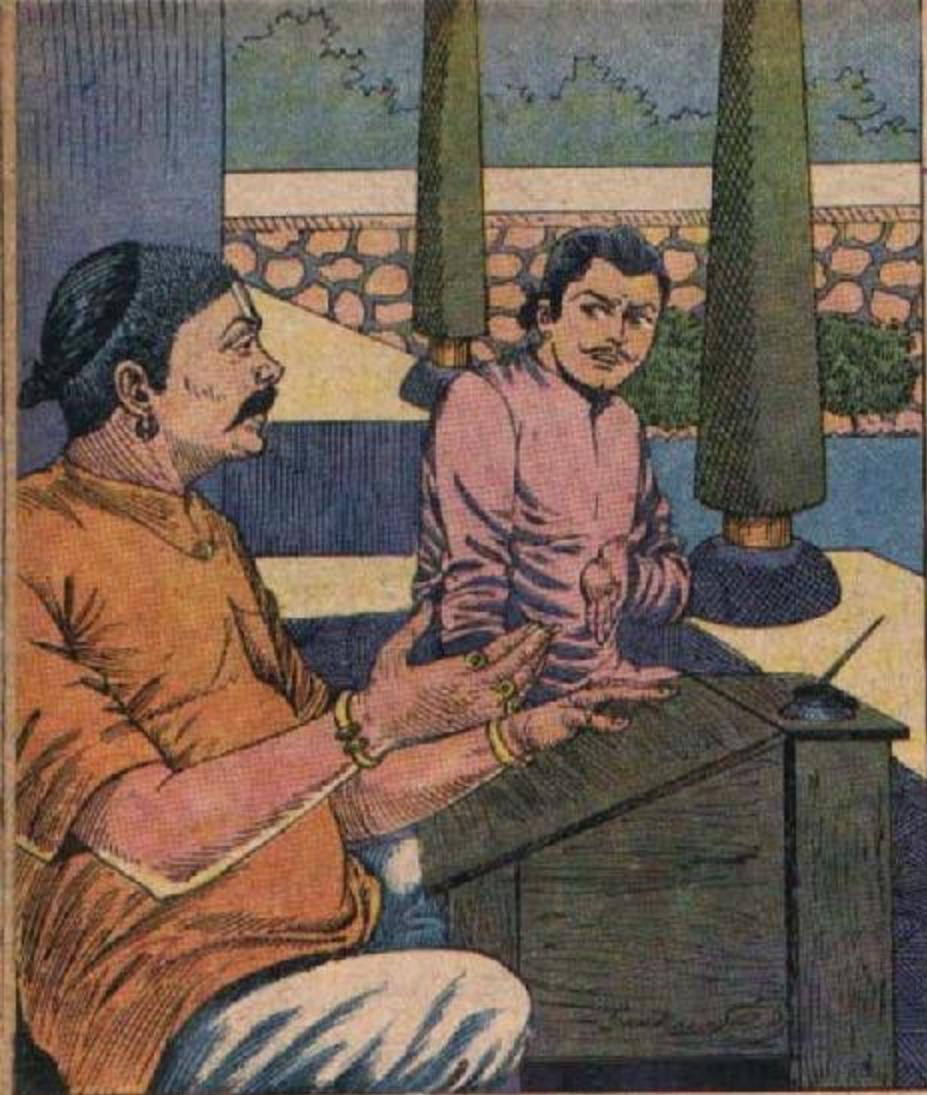
As months passed, Niranjana grew very attached to his comfortable house. He did not like to spend even a single night outside it; whenever he went out for work, he would make sure to return to it the same night.

One day, his wife Anusooya told him: "I've come to know that a group of people from our village are going on a pilgrimage. Don't you think that we too could join the party? It is high time we ourselves visited the sacred places."

The very idea of leaving the house was torturous for Niranjana. "It is true that we should go on a pilgrimage. But what about the house? It will take us a minimum of six months to return from the pilgrimage and who will look after it in our absence?" asked Niranjana, a bit irritated at the thought of going away.

Anusooya was taken aback by her husband's reasoning. "Do you mean to say that you'll forego a pilgrimage because you don't want to leave your house? How very shocking? It is the good deeds like making a pilgrimage that will take us to heaven and not your attachment to the house," she told him unhesitatingly.

"Hell or heaven—I don't care. But, I'll not sell this house and go on a pilgrimage," said



Niranjan in a firm tone.

"But, who is asking you to sell it off? Why can't you request your brother or your brother-in-law to come and live in this house until we return? I'm sure no one will refuse to stay in this cosy house," argued Anusooya.

"I've no faith in any one of them. They can't take care of my house; they are not capable of it," replied Niranjan snappily. Saying so, he suddenly left the house and walked away towards the bazaar.

"Seth Challaramji," asked Niranjan, after telling him about his plans of going on the long pilgrimage, "could you therefore lend me rupees two

thousand keeping my house as security?"

Seth Challaram was only too eager to give the money—of course, in his own selfish interest. He, however, wanted to make sure that Niranjan went on a long trip. So, he said, exuberantly, "Niranjan Babu, what will you do with just rupees two thousand? Your trip is going to be a long one and in travel one never knows how much money one may require. Take rupees five thousand. I'll charge you only ten percent interest on it. I want you to spend freely, giving offerings to the deities and alms to the needy."

"But, how will I ever repay all this amount? No, no, please give me only rupees two thousand," said Niranjan.

"Babuji, I've full faith in you. When you return you can pay me up in easy instalments. I'm not in a hurry. After all, we belong to the same village and it would be a shame if I cannot help you in times of need. Take these rupees five thousand and take all the time in your pilgrimage, for you must visit all the gods and goddesses at the sacred places." The money-

lender tried to convince him and almost forced upon Niranjan rupees five thousand.

Niranjan chuckled to himself as he left the house of Challaram. He went straight to his banker and deposited the money in the fixed deposit account at fifteen percent annual interest.

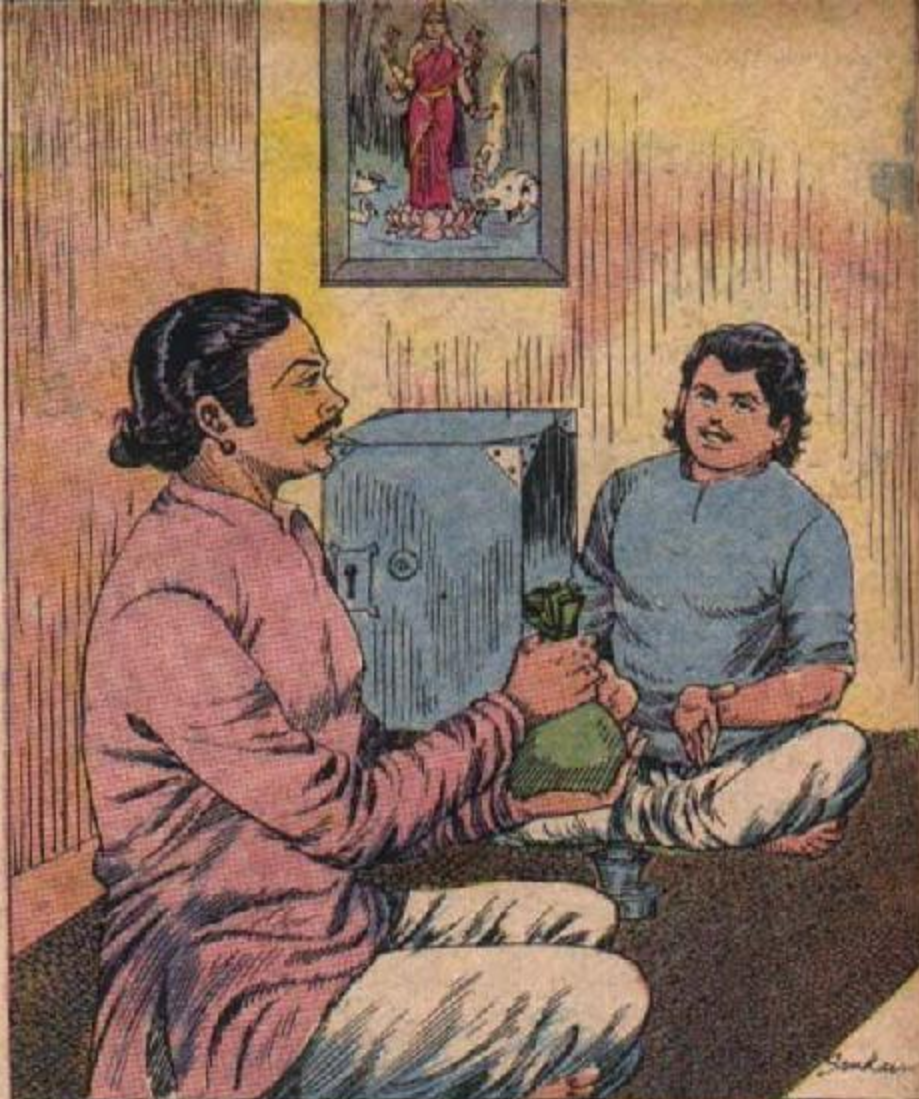
"Anusooya," he called out to his wife as he entered his house, "I've made all the necessary arrangements for the pilgrimage. We shall leave next week along with the group from our village," said an enthusiastic Niranjan.

The wife was surprised at this sudden change in her husband's attitude. "But, who is going to look after the house?" she asked.

"You don't have to worry about it. God will take care of it," replied the husband in a casual tone.

Three days later, they were on their long pilgrimage. The village group of pilgrims were happy to have them because Anusooya was known to be a very pious and devoted lady.

The villagers returned in a few months, but Niranjan and Anusooya spent two months



more at Hardwar and two months at Kanyakumari. Anusooya was surprised that her husband did not worry about the condition of their house even once!

It was a little over one year when the couple returned home. Their pilgrimage had gone off very satisfactorily, but, they were very exhausted and tired.

As soon as they opened their garden gate Anusooya was beyond herself with joy. She forgot all about her exhaustion and cried out, "Wonderful! Beautiful! How is it possible that the garden is so well kept? The flowers are blooming and

the trees are all green—who has taken care of these? Tell, tell me please.” She could not contain her joy and curiosity any longer.

Niranjan smiled meaningfully. “Come inside the house, Anusooya, I’ll tell you everything.”

The house too was all clean and bright as if someone had been cleaning it every day.

“It is all due to the care of Challaramji,” said Niranjan, breaking the suspense.

“How? Did you pay him to take care of our house?” asked Anusooya.

“No; on the contrary, he paid me to look after my house,” said Niranjan with a smile. “I knew well that Seth Challaramji would take good care of our house. From the way he insisted on giving me more money, I

guessed that Challaramji never expected us to return from the pilgrimage. He thought that as we are old we will never be able to survive the long and arduous pilgrimage. As a result, the house would belong to him.

“Secondly, he made it sure that even if we returned, we will never be able to pay back the money and that is why he forced on me a huge amount,” explained Niranjan.

“Then, what about the money you borrowed from him? Have you spent it on the pilgrimage?” asked an eager Anusooya.

“Not a pie. On the contrary, I’ve earned a profit by depositing it in the bank—five percent more! Tomorrow I shall withdraw it from the bank and repay it to Challaramji,” said Niranjan with a victorious smile.

Anusooya smiled.





## THE STRONGEST MEDICINE

**L**ook here, already a week has passed. The doctor's medicine has failed to work," said Vimala.

Sudhir, her husband, nodded, but said, "We must wait for another week. The doctor had said that the boy will be cured of his fever only at the end of the second week."

"I hear that a renowned tantrik is camping at Mangalpur. He is giving talismans to cure people of a variety of ailments. He does so every Friday. Why don't you go tomorrow, a Friday, and obtain a talisman for our son?" asked Vimala.

"I don't believe in such abracadabra. We must continue with the medicine. I shall meet the doctor tomorrow. As you know, he is the best Ayurvedic expert in the whole district!" said Sudhir.

Next day he went to the doctor's house a mile away. To his great surprise he was told that the doctor was away at Mangalpur to secure a talisman for his sick wife.

Sudhir proceeded to Mangalpur straight. He met the doctor who was coming out of the tantrik's camp. On hearing from Sudhir about his son's condition, he brought out a medicine from his bag and assured Sudhir that the boy will be cured in a week.

Sudhir followed the doctor and asked, his voice lowered, "Sir, you are the best physician in the district. How is it that you ran for the talisman for your wife instead of depending on your own medicine?"

The doctor smiled. "You see," he explained, "my wife does not understand the science



of Ayurveda, but knows the plants from which I gather herbs. She wonders how those ordinary plants, growing here and there and quite familiar to her, can have any value at all! But she has faith in the unfamiliar talisman. Know, my friend, that there is no medicine stronger than faith. It is for this that I came to secure the talisman."

Sudhir too smiled. He then returned home and saw that

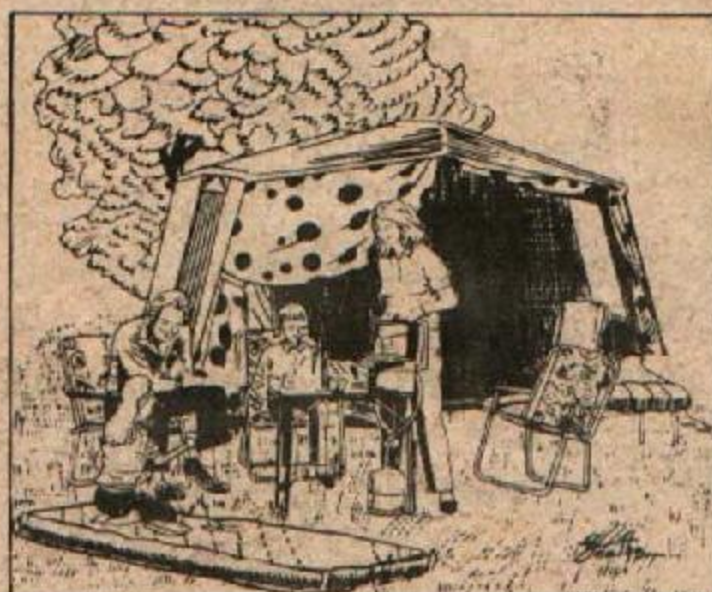
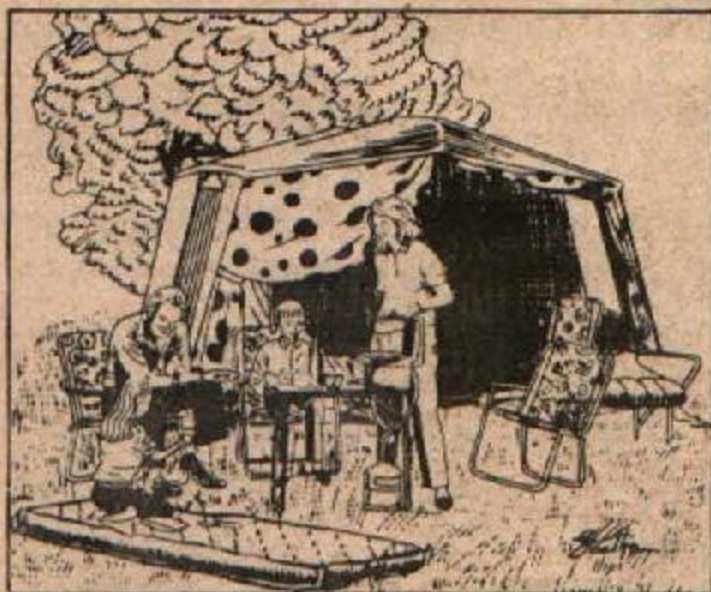
Vimala had already obtained a talisman through a neighbour.

A week passed. Their son was cured. "Didn't I tell you that the boy will be all right in another week? The medicine did work!" commented Sudhir.

Vimala laughed. "What an idea!" she said. "It is the talisman that cured our son!"

Both stuck on to their respective beliefs.

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCE





## RIVERS OF INDIA

### Tamasa in Dandakaranya

In a forest lived a great hermit, Shukracharya. He had nobody in the world as his own but his daughter, Arāja. Their hut was not far from a lake in which Arāja loved to bathe and swim.

A young king named Dandaka who was wandering alone in the forest in search of some game spied upon Arāja who was bathing in the lake. He was charmed by her.



When Arāja emerged from the lake, the young king sprang up before her and wished to lead her to his palace where he would marry her. As she did not consent to this, the king tried to drag her away.



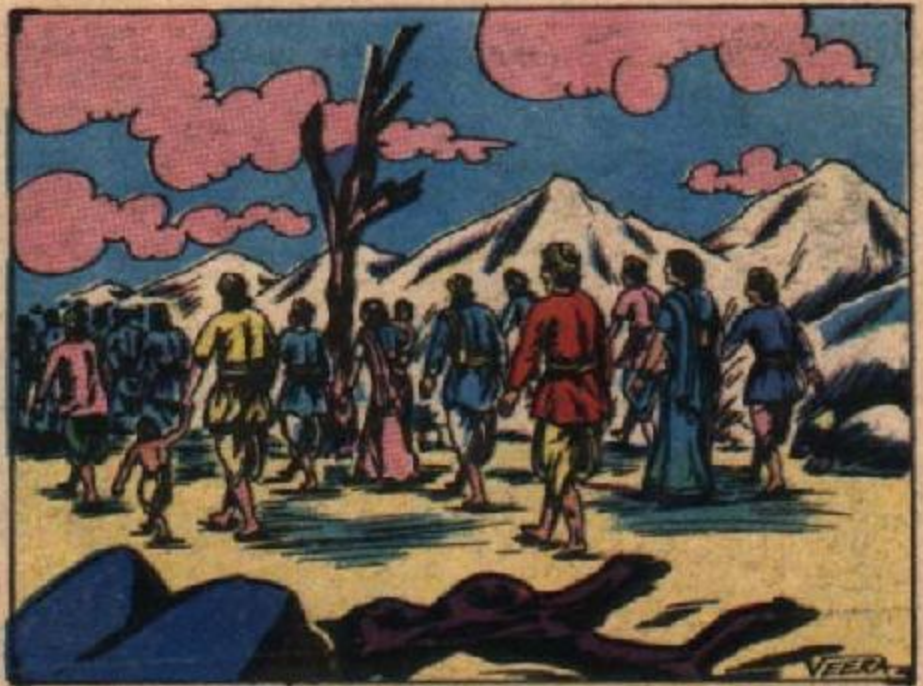
With great difficulty Arāja freed herself and ran away. She wept before her father, narrating her humiliation in the king's hands. The hermit trembled with uncontrollable fury.

The hermit burst forth, "This kingdom is plunged in sinfulness. The king who should protect the helpless, has become a scourge himself. Barring those who are truthful and pure, let the whole kingdom be destroyed!"



A sudden fire engulfed the whole kingdom as a result of the curse. The hermit left the forest, but his daughter remained in the lake until the fire subsided. Although all the other rivers and pools in the kingdom dried up, the lake remained full.

Those who were spared by the fire, left for distant places. The kingdom of Dandaka lay barren for long, covered by ashes. No living creature came near it, except for birds flying over it.



Years passed. With the rains the lake was linked with a stream from the hills and then flowed on, often overflowing into the desert-like land. Half-eaten fruits and berries thrown by birds sprouted into plants. That attracted more birds.

By and by a thick forest grew flanking the river. The river came to be called the Tamasa. The forest gradually grew wider and vaster. Because it grew on the kingdom of Dandaka, sages named it as the Dandakaranya, **Aranya** meaning a forest.





The Dandakaranya is the most famous forest of India. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana spent years in this forest when in exile. It was on one hand the haunt of ogres and demons and on the other hand the dwelling of hermits.

It was on the bank of the sweetly flowing Tamasa that India's first poet, Sage Valmiki, had his hermitage. There he composed our first epic, the Ramayana, poetry par excellence.



It is on the bank of the river Tamasa that Mother Sita brought up her twins, Lava and Kusha. Sage Valmiki taught them and they learnt to recite the epic Ramayana. The river Tamasa flows through the Dandakaranya to this day.

## LOST IN SEARCH OF THE LOST CITY

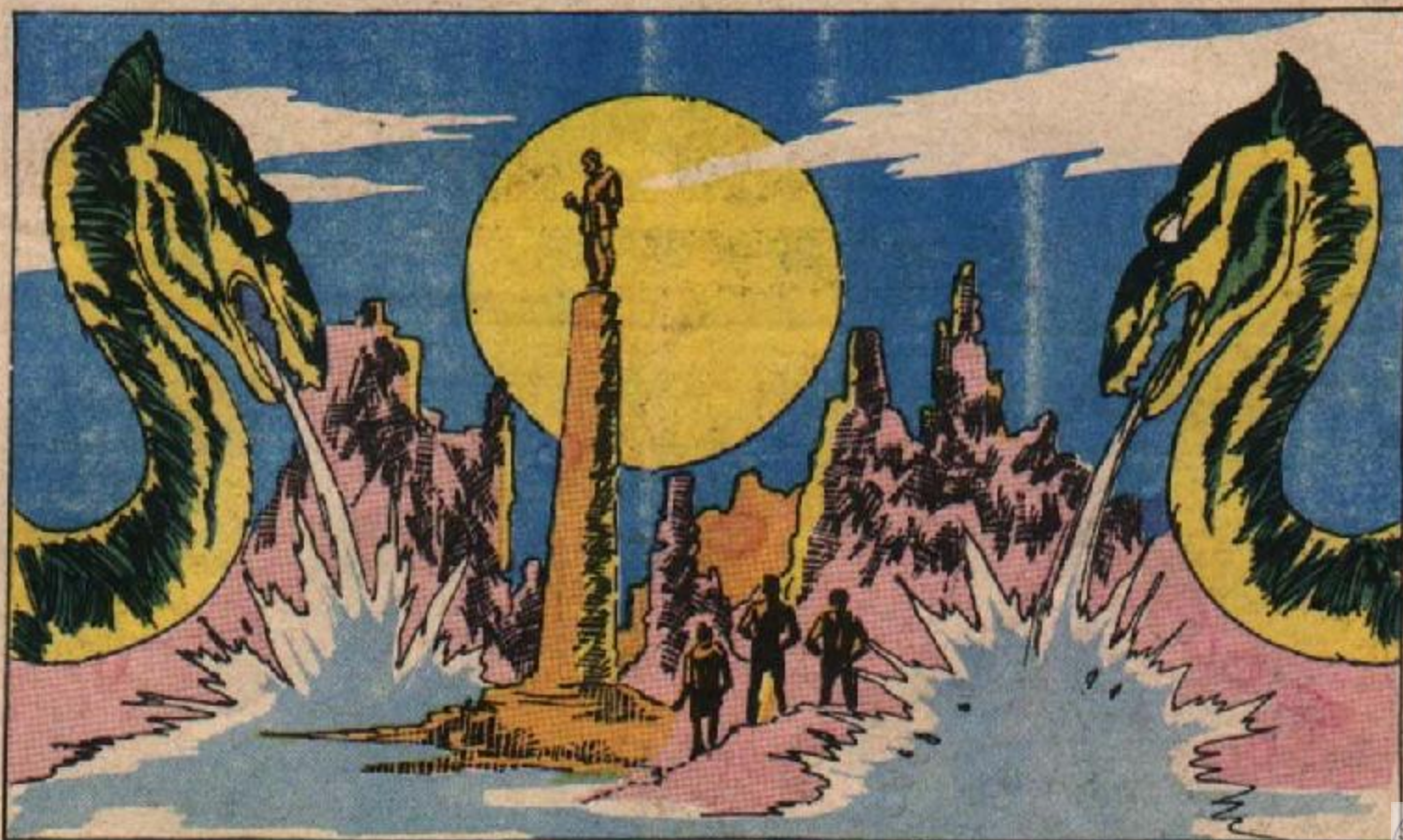
**P**ercy Fawcett was by profession a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Artillery, but by nature he was an explorer.

Once, when he was in Brazil he came across an interesting document at the National Library of Rio de Janeiro, which told of a mysterious place. It said how a party of six Portuguese and a dozen Red Indians had set out in quest of gold mines in 1743 and as they climbed over a gleaming peak of

quartz, they reached a vast plain and a few miles away was a great city—but it was a dead city!

It was built of huge blocks of stone, with the buildings carved with figures and the statue of a man on a column in the central square. On the outskirts was a gigantic hall, with fifteen rooms off it, and in each was a carved serpent's head with water flowing out of its mouth.

The explorers left the place



after sending an account of what they had seen to the coast by a Red Indian runner. Nobody knows what then became of the party.

Fawcett felt an urge to find out other lost cities. He went to South America, the sub-continent of the past and travelled towards the mouth of the Amazon river in search of a lost city which he named 'Z'.

How did he get the idea of this city?

The great novelist, Rider Haggard, who has written excellent thrillers based on the secrets of King Solomon's Mines, once gave colonel Fawcett a

black basalt figure about ten inches high, which he had obtained from Brazil. After many experts had failed to identify it, Fawcett consulted a person who could feel the vibrations given off by statues. When that person meditated on the image, he had a vision of an ancient city in South America, of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, of people taking refuge up in the hills.

Fawcett's belief in the city was strengthened by stories he had heard of houses with 'Stars to light them which never went out'. The stories were widespread, and the Red Indians



were afraid of approaching these buildings with their constantly shining lights that gave out no warmth! Fawcett believed that the people who built the city had discovered a means of lighting that was unknown to modern science.

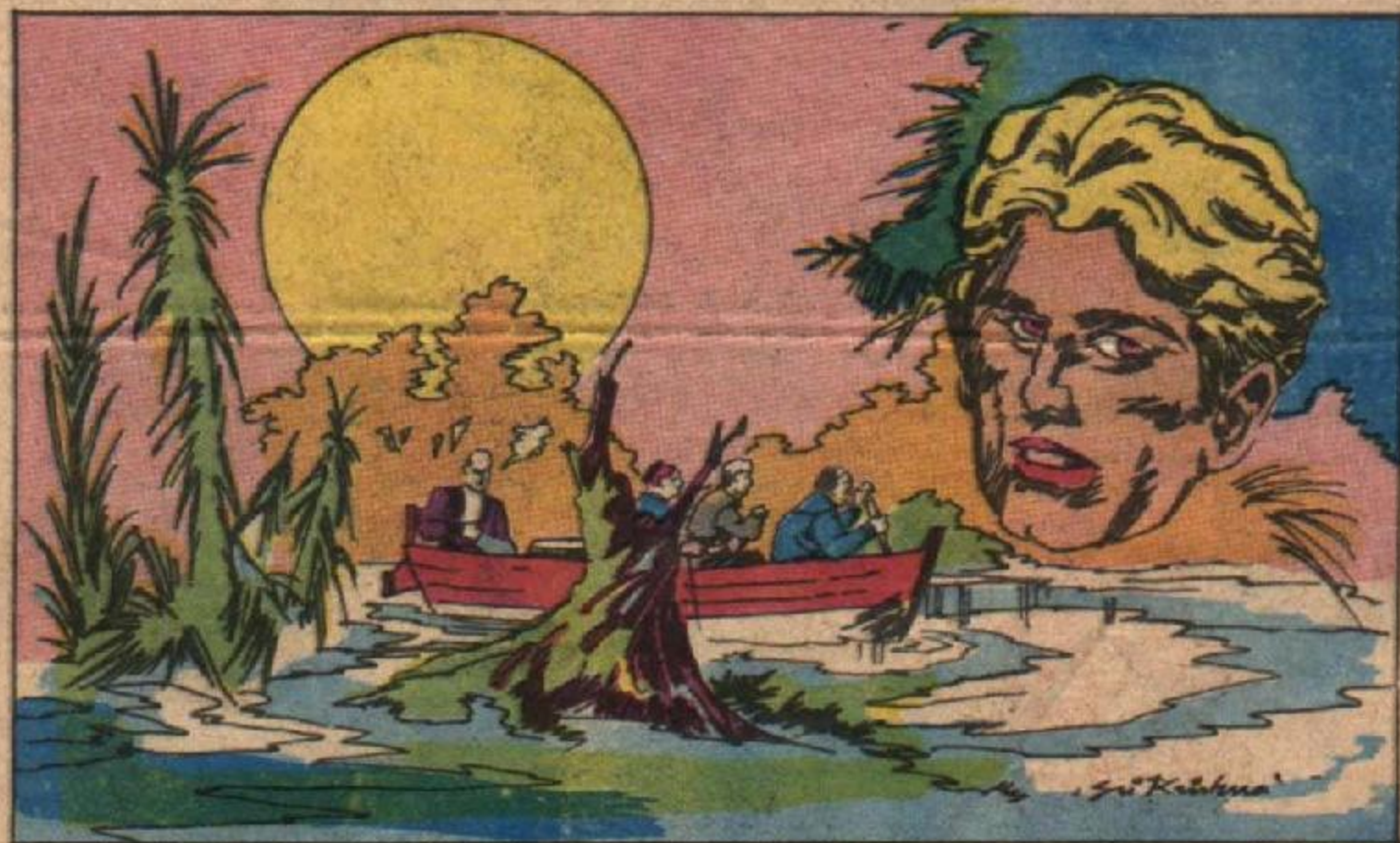
An unapproachable city set high on a plateau; mysterious white people; lost secrets of science! Fawcett wanted to give to the world, 'the most stupendous discovery of modern times'. And he set out on this 'discovery' in early 1925, taking with him his elder son, Jack, and his friend Raleigh Rimell.

In May 1925, Fawcett sent

home a letter from a place called Dead Horse Camp, writing, "You need have no fear of any failure." After that, there was silence.

Sixty years have passed. No more has been heard of him, but the argument as to what happened to him still goes on as different stories are given about his whereabouts.

As rumours spread that a French Engineer had met an old man in Brazil who said his name was Fawcett, an expedition was sponsored by the American Press, in 1926. Commander George Dyott, in charge of the expedition, went to the Dead



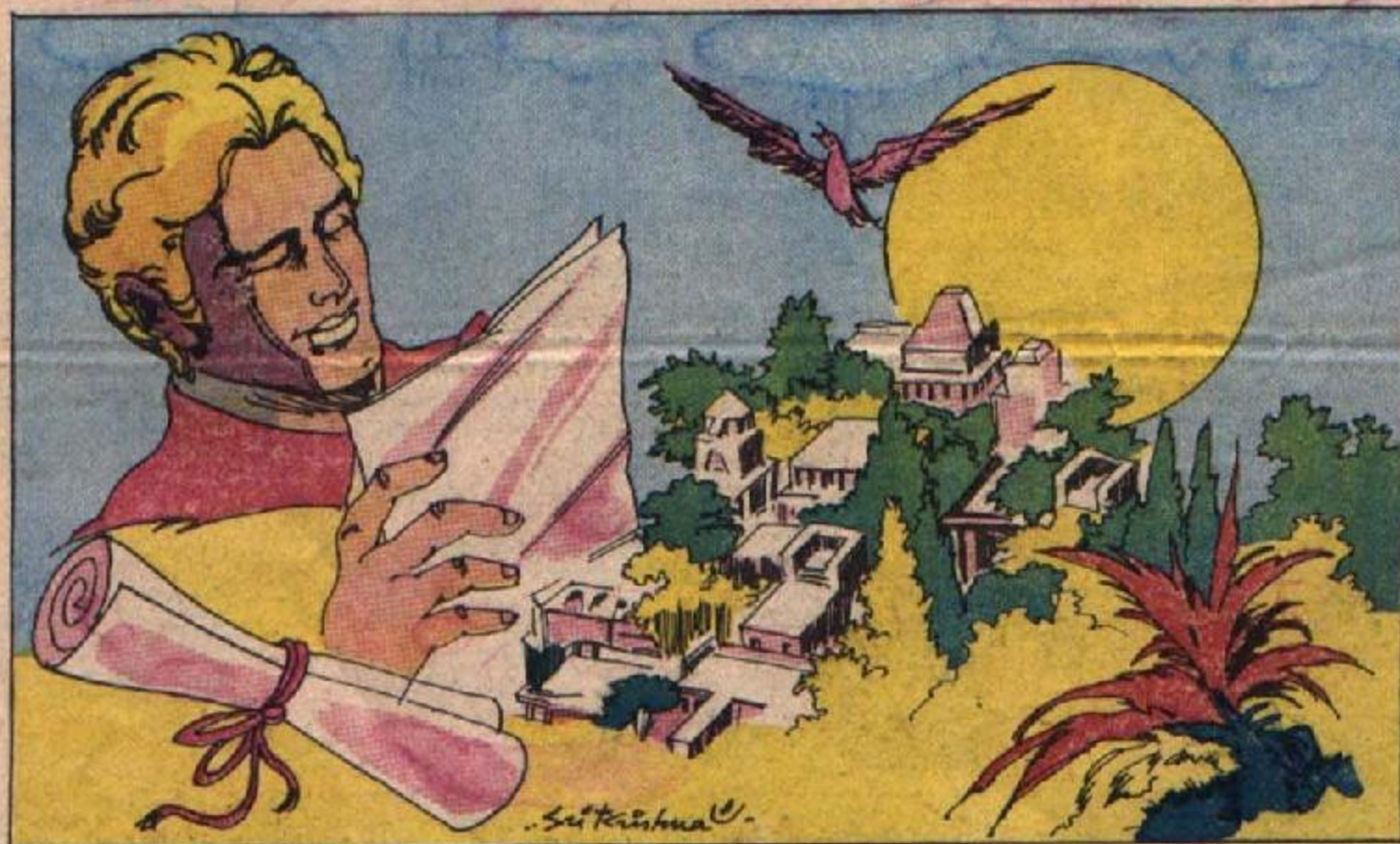
Horse Camp with a party of photographers and radio experts. Near a village named Anauqua, he found the chief-tain's child wearing a trinket around his neck, a metal plate inscribed with the name of a London firm which had supplied Fawcett's luggage. Was Fawcett killed here? Well, Mr. Dyott could not probe as his Red Indian guides refused to go farther with him.

More rumours of white men living among Indian's followed. In 1933, a compass belonging to Fawcett was found in the territory of the Bakairi Indians.

One rumour that persisted for

a long time was that Fawcett had reached the lost city, that he had even set out of it to inform the world about his exciting discovery. But he lost his way and was thus lost forever. The rumour insisted that Fawcett was not the first one to locate the city. Some others also have done so, but none has succeeded in carrying the message of the city to others.

The last party to go out in search of Fawcett had been led by his son. Their search yielded no result; but they returned with more rumours of the strange city.



## WHICH WAY TO SPELL?

Grandpa Chowdhury heard a rather strange argument between Reena and Rajesh.

"What is wrong with the sentence: 'If we analyze the color at the center, we will see that it is esthetically weak.' Why have you underlined these four words?" Rajesh demanded to know in an aggressive tone.

"It should be like this: If we analyse the colour at the centre, we will see that it is aesthetically weak," said Reena confidently.

Grandpa was intrigued. Both recited the same sentence, yet both differed in something!

Grandpa stepped into their study. The children were happy. He will surely resolve their dispute!

Soon Grandpa found out that their difference was in regard to the spelling of a few words. Rajesh wrote *analyze*; Reena was sure that it should be *analyse*. Rajesh wrote *color*; Reena insisted that it should be *colour*. Rajesh wrote *center*; Reena observed that it should be *centre*. Rajesh wrote *esthetically*; Reena was of the firm opinion that it should be *aesthetically*.

Grandpa laughed. "It is a problem that arises in the English writing outside the United Kingdom and the United States, though because of these two countries. Rajesh is influenced by the American way of spelling. Reena is conservative. She sticks on to the British form."

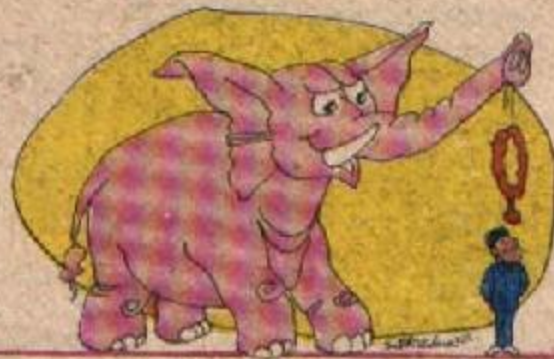
"Which is right?"

"It is not a question of right and wrong, but one of convention. I will side with Reena. We follow the Queen's English. We are a member of the Commonwealth, after all!" said Grandpa Chowdhury.



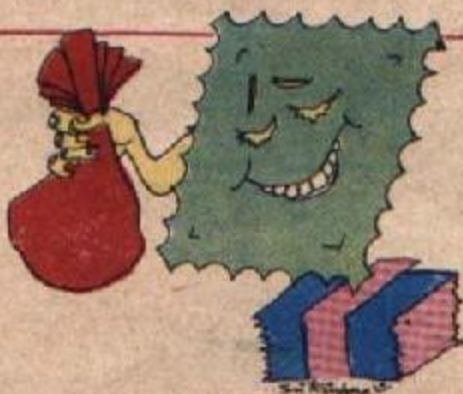
## DO YOU KNOW?

Only the Indian elephant responds to man's instructions and can be trained, not the African elephant.



One who smokes one pack of cigarettes a day inhales a half-cup of tar in a year.

R.L. Stevenson wrote *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) in 3 days after he had had a dream that inspired the plot.



San Marino, situated 125 miles to the north of Rome, is the world's oldest and smallest republic. It is 24 sq. miles in size and has a population of 19,000. Its army consists of 80 soldiers. Sale of postage stamp is its greatest source of income.

Krung Thep is the real name of Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. But Krung Thep is only a short form of its poetic full name which is the longest place-name in the world. It reads: Krung Thep Mahanakhon Bovorn Ratanakosin Mahintharayutthaya Mahadilok pop Noparatratchathani Burirom Udomratchanivetmahasathan Amornpiman Avatarnsathit Sakkathattiyavisnukarm-prasit.





## LET US KNOW

***Which is the oldest language?***

—Dhananjay Patra, Bhubaneswar.

Hundreds of primitive languages have disappeared. Even developed languages with great literary works to their credit have been totally forgotten. For example, India's as well as the world's first collection of stories and novellas, *Brihat Katha*, was written in a language called the *Pishacha*. A part of the work is available to us as the *Katha-sarit-sagara*, but the language in which it was originally written has completely disappeared.

Hence it is difficult to say which was the world's oldest language. However, of all the living languages with literary traditions, Sanskrit is the oldest. Nothing is known about its origin. Legend says that it was *Devabhasha*—or the language of the gods given by them to men. Scholars have not been able to say for certain when the earliest known Sanskrit verses, the hymns of the Rig Veda, were composed; but they could very well be 6000 years old.

***Which is the strongest animal in the world?***

—Navi Radjou, Pondicherry.

Strength is a relative quality. An elephant is stronger than a boar. But the elephant's strength may not be greater than the boar's in proportion to its bulk. However the blue whale, the largest and the heaviest animal, seems to be the strongest too. It can weigh 200 or more tons—or as much as 30 elephants!

***Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.***

## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



K.P.A. Swamy



Prabu Sankar

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for Jan. '85 goes to:—  
Mr. Stenson Reid, C/o. W.A. Reid  
Railway Quarters 162/1, South Lallaguda  
Secunderabad (A.P.)

The Winning Entry:— 'Solitary Symphony—Perfect Harmony'

## PICKS FROM THE WISE

I am not an Athenian, nor a Greek, but a citizen of the world.  
—Socrates

Men have become the tools of their tools.  
—Thoreau

If a man bites a dog, that is news.  
—John Bogart

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"You mean cavities, love."

"Yes... that's what I mean. But then I showed him my teeth, mummy. And told him about my nice toothpaste. The tasty, foamy one."

"Forhan's Fluoride, my dear."

"Oh yes... I told him I use it because you say it's good. And because I like it."

"It's good because it strengthens your gums, and gives your teeth a long life."

"Ya, that too! Mummy, can I have some of this chocolate cake? I promise to brush my teeth later...!"

**Forhan's Fluoride**  
The tasty, foamy toothpaste that protects both gums and teeth.



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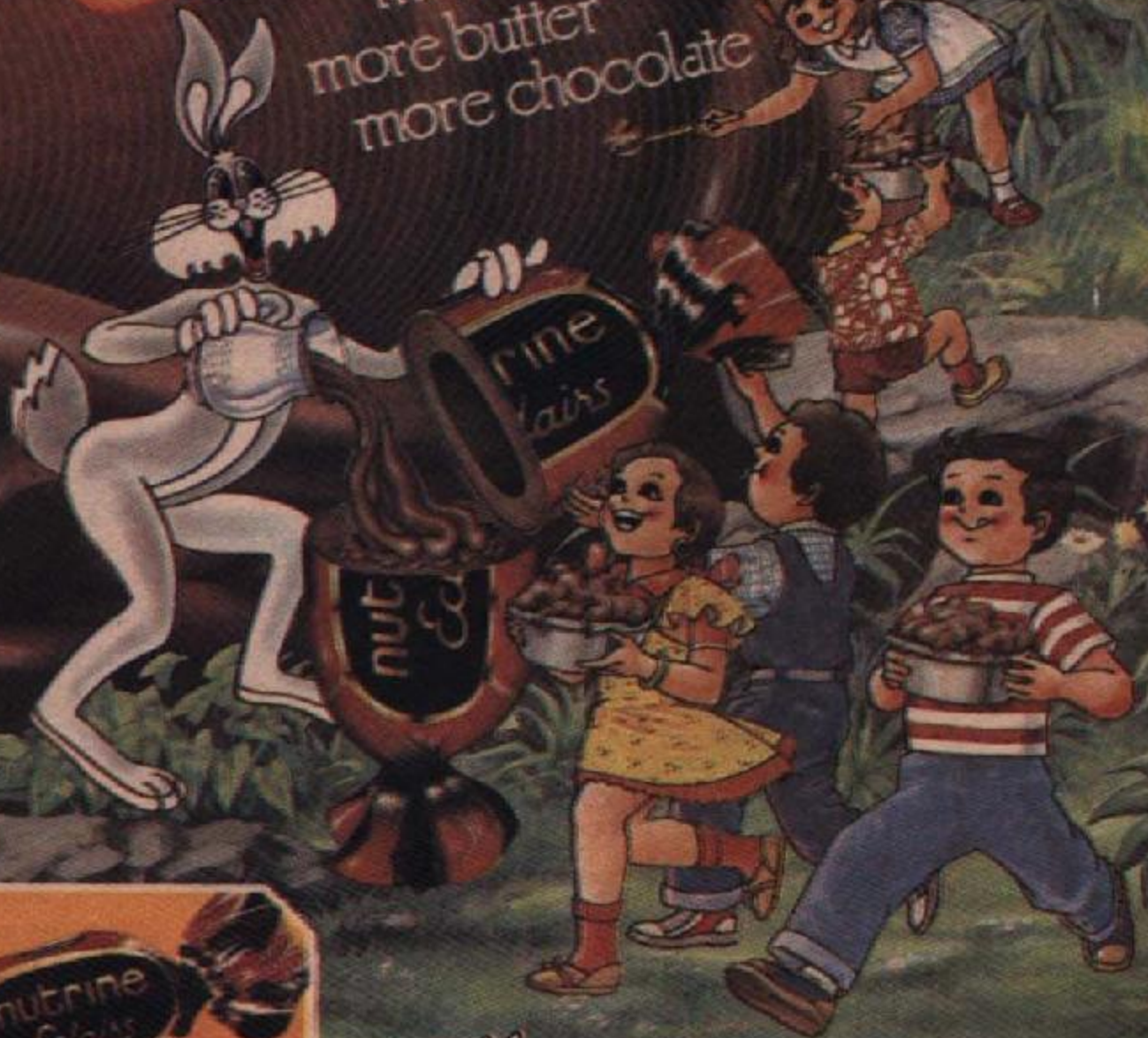


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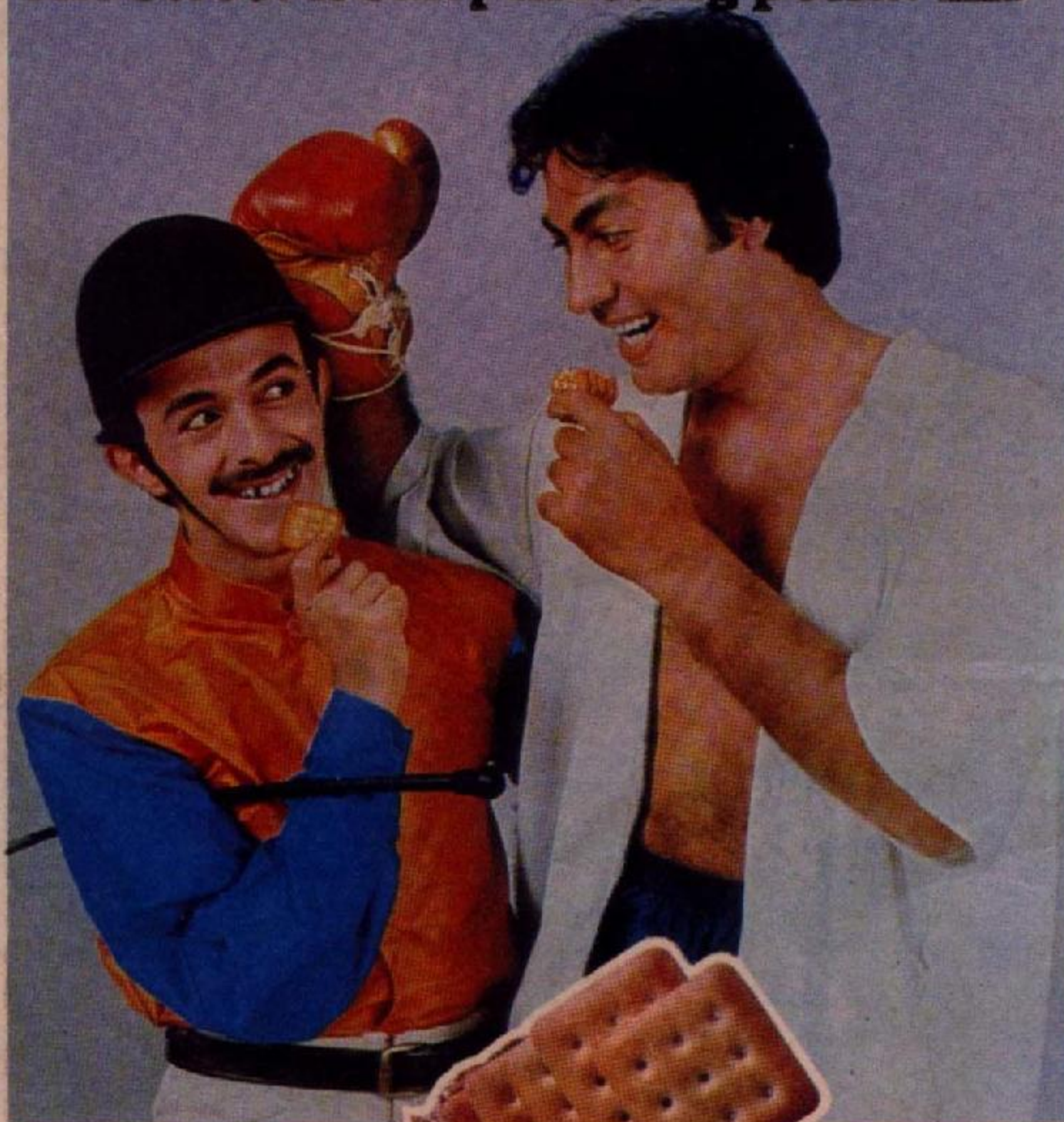
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